

CHAPTER 13

THE TRIBULATION OF THE KHARIJITES AND MODERN-DAY TERRORISTS

13.1 THE BELIEFS, DOCTRINES AND BLAMEWORTHY INNOVATIONS OF THE KHARIJITES

Islam is a religion of balance and moderation. God Almighty mentions about the Muslim *Umma*:

﴿وَكَذَٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا﴾

*‘And likewise We have made you a moderate nation’.*¹

Some people have rendered the phrase ‘*ummatan wasaṭan*’ as the middle, medium or impartial nation, but in reality, it signifies moderation, balance and equilibrium. This moderation is in both doctrine and behaviour. That is the chief attribute of Islam. Those who eschew moderation have drifted away from the true spirit of Islam. Throughout the ages there emerged amongst the Muslims various groups that have embraced extremism, and were shunned as a consequence even though they manifested Islam, performed acts of religious devotion and adopted the outward trappings of Islam. At the forefront of these extremist groups are the Kharijites.

The Kharijites first appeared in the days of the Prophet ﷺ and their ideas gained momentum during the caliphate of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه, until it emerged as a full-fledged and organized group during the caliphate of our master ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. God Most High alluded to the Kharijites in the Qur’ān and there are many prophetic hadith reports that explain their signs, beliefs, doctrines and practices.

In general, the Kharijites committed acts of terrorism and carried out atrocities in the name of Islam. Due to their extreme and specious religious arguments, they would declare it permissible to shed the blood of Muslims. In this chapter we shall examine the relationship between the beliefs and actions of the Kharijites of old and the terrorists of today.

¹ Qur’ān 2:143.

13.2 THE DEFINITION OF A KHARIJITE

Before examining the signs, beliefs and doctrines of the Kharijites, let us cite some of the definitions that the classical scholars have given for them. Imam Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī said in his famous book of heresiology, *al-Milal wa al-niḥal*:

كُلُّ مَنْ خَرَجَ عَنِ الْإِمَامِ الْحَقِّ الَّذِي اتَّفَقَتِ الْجَمَاعَةُ عَلَيْهِ يُسَمَّى خَارِجِيًّا، سَوَاءً
كَانَ الْخُرُوجُ فِي أَيَّامِ الصَّحَابَةِ عَلَى الْأُئِمَّةِ الرَّاشِدِينَ أَوْ كَانَ يَغْدُهُمْ عَلَى التَّابِعِينَ
بِإِحْسَانٍ وَالْأُئِمَّةِ فِي كُلِّ زَمَانٍ.

Anyone who revolts against the Muslim government that enjoys the support of the community [*jamā‘a*] is called a Kharijite—whether this revolt was against the Rightly Guided Caliphs during the time of the Companions or against those after them who followed them with excellence [the second generation, *al-Tābi‘īn*], or the Muslim rulers of every subsequent era.¹

Imam al-Nawawī said:

الْخَوَارِجُ صِنْفٌ مِنَ الْمُبْتَدِعَةِ يَعْتَقِدُونَ أَنَّ مَنْ فَعَلَ كَبِيرَةً كَفَرَ، وَخُلِدَ فِي النَّارِ،
وَيَطْعَنُونَ لِذَلِكَ فِي الْأُئِمَّةِ وَلَا يَحْضُرُونَ مَعَهُمُ الْجُمُعَاتِ وَالْجَمَاعَاتِ.

The Kharijites are a group of blameworthy innovators who believe that a person who commits a grave sin falls into disbelief and will eternally reside in Hell. For this reason, they defame the rulers and do not participate in the congregational prayers or the Friday prayers with them.²

Ibn Taymiyya stated:

كَانُوا أَهْلَ سَيْفٍ وَقِتَالٍ، ظَهَرَتْ مُخَالَفَتُهُمْ لِلْجَمَاعَةِ؛ حِينَ كَانُوا يُقَاتِلُونَ النَّاسَ.
وَأَمَّا الْيَوْمَ فَلَا يَعْرِفُهُمْ أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ . . . وَمُرُوفُهُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ خُرُوجُهُمْ بِاسْتِحْلَالِهِمْ
دِمَاءَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ.

¹ Al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa al-niḥal*, p. 114.

² Yahyā al-Nawawī, *Rawḍat al-tālibīn*, 10:51.

Since they were armed and inclined to fight, their opposition to the community [*jamaʿa*] manifested when they started killing the people. However, as for today, most people [due to their religious garb and appearance] do not know of them. . . . [A]nd their ‘passing through the religion’ is their leaving it because of their having declared lawful the blood and wealth of the Muslims.¹

Elsewhere he stated:

وَهَؤُلَاءِ الْخَوَارِجُ لَيْسُوا ذَلِكَ الْمُعَسَّكَرَ الْمَخْصُوصَ الْمَعْرُوفَ فِي التَّارِيخِ، بَلْ يَخْرُجُونَ إِلَى زَمَنِ الدَّجَالِ. وَتَخْصِيصُهُ ﷺ لِلْفِتْنَةِ الَّتِي خَرَجَتْ فِي زَمَنِ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ، إِنَّمَا هُوَ لِمَعَانٍ قَامَتْ بِهِمْ، وَكُلُّ مَنْ وَجَدَتْ فِيهِ تِلْكَ الْمَعَانِي أُلْحِقَ بِهِمْ، لِأَنَّ التَّخْصِيصَ بِالذِّكْرِ لَمْ يَكُنْ لِاخْتِصَاصِهِمْ بِالْحُكْمِ، بَلْ لِحَاجَةِ الْمُخَاطَبِينَ فِي زَمَنِهِ ﷺ إِلَى تَعْيِينِهِمْ.

And these Kharijites are not only the armed group that was known in history [during the caliphate of ‘Alī]; rather, they are the ones who will appear time and time again until the time of the Anti-Christ [al-Dajjāl].² The Prophet’s particular mention of the group that appeared during the time of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib was due to the many traits found in them. Anyone in whom these traits are found is counted amongst them, for the particular mention of them [by the Prophet ﷺ] was not because the ruling applied to them alone, but rather it was because those who were addressed during the Prophet’s time ﷺ needed to fix their identity in the times to come.³

Ibn Ḥajar states,

الْخَوَارِجُ فَهُمْ جَمْعٌ خَارِجَةٌ أَيْ طَائِفَةٌ، وَهُمْ قَوْمٌ مُبْتَدِعُونَ. سُمُّوا بِذَلِكَ لِخُرُوجِهِمْ عَنِ الدِّينِ، وَخُرُوجِهِمْ عَلَى خِيَارِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ.

¹ Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Nubuwwāt*, p. 222.

² Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿa al-fatāwā*, 28:495–496.

³ Ibid., 28:476–477.

‘The word “Kharijites” is the plural of *khārija* [“he who went out”], which means a faction. They are a group of blameworthy innovators, and are called rebels because of their leaving the religion and rebelling against the best of the Muslims’.¹

Imam Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī commented:

طَائِفَةٌ خَرَجُوا عَنِ الدِّينِ وَهُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّبْتَدِعُونَ سُمُّوا بِذَلِكَ لِأَنَّهُمْ خَرَجُوا عَلَى خَيْرِ
الْمُسْلِمِينَ.

‘They are a faction that has left the religion, and they are a group of blameworthy innovators. They are called that because they rebelled against the best of the Muslims’.²

Ibn Nujaym al-Ḥanafī stated,

الْخَوَارِجُ قَوْمٌ لَهُمْ مَنَعَةٌ وَحِمِيَّةٌ خَرَجُوا عَلَيْهِ بِتَأْوِيلٍ يَرَوْنَ أَنَّهُ عَلَى بَاطِلٍ كُفِّرَ أَوْ
مَعْصِيَةٍ، تُوْجِبُ قِتَالَهُ بِتَأْوِيلِهِمْ يَسْتَحِلُّونَ دِمَاءَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ.

The Kharijites are a folk possessing strength and zealotry, who revolt against the government due to a self-styled interpretation. They believe that government is upon falsehood, disbelief or disobedience that necessitates it being fought against, and they declare lawful the blood and wealth of the Muslims.³

This is a basic outline and definition of the Kharijites. Let us now review the Qurʾānic exegeses, hadith commentaries and other sources to know the meanings of the Qurʾānic verses and prophetic hadith that condemn the atrocities and terrorism committed by the Kharijites against Muslims and non-Muslims.

¹ Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī*, 12:283.

² Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī, *Umdat al-qārī*, 24:84.

³ Ibn Nujaym, *al-Baḥr al-rāʾiq*, 2:234.

13.3 THE TRIBULATION OF THE KHARIJITES AS ARTICULATED IN THE QUR'ĀN

The Qur'ān has strongly rejected, in numerous places, the heinous act of murder, especially murder on a mass scale that spreads terror and mischief on earth. According to the Qur'ān, those who commit such deeds are considered brigands and rebels (which we already discussed). A thorough study of the Qur'ān will shed light on the many signs and blameworthy innovations of the Kharijites. Here we present some of these Qur'ānic verses.

13.3.1 THE KHARIJITES POSSESS DEVIATION IN THEIR HEARTS

God says in the Qur'ān,

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ
مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَبَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ
تَأْوِيلِهِ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ ءَأَمَّنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِنْدِ
رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ﴾

'He is the One Who has revealed to you the Book comprising some firm and solid verses [i.e., literally clear and precise in meaning]; they are the foundation of [commandments] of the Book. And other verses are figurative [i.e., containing abstract and allusive meaning]. So, those who have deviation in their hearts follow only its figurative verses [just] under the urge to create disruption and with the motive to supply them self-seeking interpretation instead of their true interpretation. But none knows its true interpretation apart from God. And those who are perfectly firm in knowledge say: 'We believe in it. The whole (Book) has been revealed by our Lord'. And direction and guidance is the share of only those who possess wisdom and insight'.¹

Interpreting this verse, Imam Ibn Abī Ḥātim wrote,

¹ Qur'ān 3:7.

عَنْ أَبِي أُمَامَةَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ: أَنَّهُمُ الْخَوَارِجُ.

‘Abū Umāma reported that the Messenger of God ﷺ said, “They are the Kharijites”.¹

Ibn Kathīr cited a hadith in which the Prophet ﷺ said,

﴿فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَبَهَ﴾: هُمُ الْخَوَارِجُ.

“As for those who possess deviation in their hearts, they seek to follow what is unclear thereof” are none else but the Kharijites’.²

Imam al-Khāzin mentioned in his exegesis the various people of deviation and included the Kharijites amongst them.³ The hadith of Abū Umāma cited by Abū Ḥafṣ al-Ḥanbalī in his exegesis is revealing and deserves mention. Abū Ḥafṣ al-Ḥanbalī wrote:

قَالَ الْحَسَنُ: هُمُ الْخَوَارِجُ، وَكَانَ قَتَادَةُ إِذَا قَرَأَ هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ ﴿فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ﴾ قَالَ: إِنْ لَمْ يَكُونُوا الْحَزُورِيَّةَ فَلَا أَدْرِي مَنْ هُمْ. . . . وَعَنْ أَبِي غَالِبٍ قَالَ: كُنْتُ أَمْشِي مَعَ أَبِي أُمَامَةَ، وَهُوَ عَلَى حِمَارٍ حَتَّى إِذَا انْتَهَى إِلَى دَرَجٍ مَسْجِدٍ دِمَشْقَ، فَقَالَ أَبُو أُمَامَةَ: كِلَابُ النَّارِ، كِلَابُ النَّارِ، كِلَابُ النَّارِ، شَرُّ قَتْلَى تَحْتَ ظِلِّ السَّمَاءِ، طُوبَى لِمَنْ قَتَلَهُمْ وَقَتْلَوْهُ - يَقُولُهَا ثَلَاثًا. ثُمَّ بَكَى، فَقُلْتُ: مَا يُبْكِيكَ يَا أَبَا أُمَامَةَ؟ قَالَ: رَحْمَةً لَهُمْ. إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْإِسْلَامِ (فَصَارُوا كُفَّارًا) فَخَرَجُوا مِنْهُ. فَقُلْتُ: يَا أَبَا أُمَامَةَ، هُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ، قُلْتُ: أَشَيْءٌ تَقُولُهُ بِرَأْيِكَ، أَمْ شَيْءٌ سَمِعْتَهُ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ؟ فَقَالَ: إِنِّي إِذَنْ لَجَرِيءٌ، إِنِّي إِذَا لَجَرِيءٌ، بَلْ سَمِعْتُهُ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ غَيْرَ مَرَّةٍ وَلَا مَرَّتَيْنِ، وَلَا ثَلَاثٍ، وَلَا أَرْبَعٍ، وَلَا خَمْسٍ، وَلَا سِتٍّ، وَلَا سَبْعٍ، وَوَضَعَ أَصْبُعِيهِ فِي أُذُنَيْهِ، قَالَ: وَإِلَّا فَصُمْتَ - قَالَهَا ثَلَاثًا.

Al-Ḥasan said, ‘They [who have deviation in their hearts] are the Kharijites’. And when Qatāda recited this verse,

¹ Ibn Abī Ḥatīm al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Aẓīm*, 2:594.

² Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Aẓīm*, 1:347.

³ Al-Khāzin, *Lubāb al-ta’wīl*, 1:217.

‘So as for those who possess deviation in their hearts . . .’, he would say, ‘If they are not the Ḥarūriyya [i.e., Kharijites] then I do not know who they are. . . .’ It is reported from Abū Ghālib who said, ‘I was once walking with Abū Umāma as he rode a donkey. When he finally reached the door of the Mosque of Damascus he said thrice, “They are the dogs of Hellfire. They are the most evil of those slain under the heavens. Glad tidings to the one who kills them and the one who is killed by them”, then he wept. I said, “O Abū Umāma, what causes you to cry?” He replied, “Out of pity for them. They were from the people of Islam [and became disbelievers] and left its fold”. I asked, “O Abū Umāma! Are these [the Kharijites] the ones you are referring to?” He replied, “Yes”. I then asked, “Is this something you say from your own opinion, or is it something you heard from the Messenger of God ﷺ?” He replied, “I would be most foolhardy if I said this from my own opinion; rather, I heard it from the Messenger of God not once, twice, thrice, or four times, five times, six times or seven times, but several times”. Then he inserted his fingers into his ears and said thrice, “If what I say is untrue, let both of my ears go deaf”.’¹

Imam al-Suyūṭī also narrated this hadith in his exegesis and explained that the Prophet ﷺ meant the Kharijites.² Al-Naḥās has also narrated from ‘Ā’isha رضي الله عنها who reported that ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās said that the people of deviation mentioned in the verse were the Kharijites.³

13.3.2 THE KHARIJITES ARE APOSTATES WHOSE FACES WILL BE DARKENED

God says in the Qur’ān,

¹ Abū Ḥaṣṣ al-Ḥanbalī, *al-Lubāb fī ‘ulūm al-Kitāb*, 3:437.

² Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, 2:148.

³ Al-Naḥās, *Ma‘ānī al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*, 1:349.

﴿يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهٌ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوهٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اسْوَدَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ أَكَفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ﴾

*‘On the Day when many faces will be bright and many others will be dark, the ones with dark faces [will be asked], “Did you reject faith after you had believed? So taste the torment for the disbelief you had been committing”’.*¹

Interpreting this verse, Imam Ibn Abī Ḥātim narrated from Abū Umāma that the Prophet ﷺ said, ‘[In this verse] they [who rejected faith after believing] are the Kharijites’.² Ibn Kathīr also referred to the Kharijites in his interpretation of this verse.³ Ibn Mardawayh narrated the same report via Abū Ghālib and Abū Umāma. Imam Aḥmad narrated it in his *Musnad*, Imam al-Ṭabarānī in his *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr* and Imam Ibn Abī Ḥātim narrated it in his exegesis from Abū Ghālib’s chain of transmission. In his exegesis of this verse, Imam al-Suyūṭī also referred to the Kharijites.⁴

13.3.3 THE KHARIJITES ARE PEOPLE OF SEDITION AND RUIN

God says in the Qur’ān,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَخْلَدُوا بِطَانَةِ مَنْ دُونَكُمْ لَا يَأْلَوْنَكُمْ خَبَالًا وَدُومًا مَا عَسَيْتُمْ
قَدْ بَدَتْ أَلْبَغْضَاءُ مِنْ أَقْوَاهِهِمْ وَمَا تُخْفِي صُدُورُهُمْ أَكْبَرُ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ إِنَّ
كُنتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ﴾

‘O believers! Do not confide in those who are not from amongst you. They will never miss [any] chance to cause you mischief. They wish you severe torture. As for their malice, that has become evident from their utterances, and [the hostility] that they have concealed in their hearts

¹ Qur’ān 3:106.

² Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Aẓīm*, 2:594.

³ Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Aẓīm*, 1:347.

⁴ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, 2:148.

is [even] greater. We have made the Signs manifest to you, if you would use your intellect'.¹

Imam Ibn Abī Ḥātim said in his exegesis of this verse,

عَنْ أَبِي أُمَامَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ، أَنَّهُ قَالَ: هُمُ الْخَوَارِجُ.

‘Abū Umāma reported that the Messenger of God ﷺ said, “They are the Kharijites”.²

Imam al-Qurṭubī commented in his exegesis of this verse that it indicates the Kharijites, and he mentioned that they will continually cause strife and use trickery and deceit.³

13.3.4 THE KHARIJITES ARE AT WAR WITH GOD AND HIS MESSENGER ﷺ AND MUST BE KILLED

God says in the Qur’ān,

﴿إِنَّمَا جَزَاءُ الَّذِينَ يُحَارِبُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا أَنْ يُقَتَّلُوا أَوْ يُصَلَّبُوا أَوْ تُقَطَّعَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ مِّنْ خَلْفٍ أَوْ يُنْفَوْا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ذَلِكَ لَهُمْ خِزْيٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ﴾

‘Indeed, those who wage war against God and His Messenger and remain engaged in creating mischief in the land [i.e., perpetrate terrorism, robbery and burglary amongst the Muslims], their punishment is that they should be slain, or crucified, or their hands and their feet on opposite sides should be cut off, or that they should be exiled from the land [either by banishment or by imprisonment]. That is for them a humiliation in this world, and for them there is a terrible torment in the Hereafter’.⁴

Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ said in his interpretation of this verse,

¹ Qur’ān 3:118.

² Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Aẓīm*, 3:742.

³ Muhammad al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi‘ li aḥkām al-Qur’ān*, 4:179.

⁴ Qur’ān 5:33.

مَنْ شَهَرَ السَّلَاحَ فِي فِتْنَةِ الْإِسْلَامِ، وَأَخَافَ السَّبِيلَ ثُمَّ ظَفَرَ بِهِ، وَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ فِيمَا مِ
الْمُسْلِمِينَ فِيهِ بِالْخِيَارِ، إِنْ شَاءَ قَتَلَهُ وَإِنْ شَاءَ صَلَبَهُ وَإِنْ شَاءَ قَطَعَ يَدَهُ وَرِجْلَهُ.

Whoever takes up arms against the Muslims and spreads fear on the roads, and is subsequently apprehended and caught, his fate is at the discretion of the ruler of the Muslims; if he so decides he may kill him, and if he so decides he may crucify him or cut off his hands and feet from opposite sides.¹

This interpretation was also mentioned by Imam al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr, and reported from Saʿīd b. al-Musayyab, Mujāhid, ʿAṭāʾ, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī and al-Ḍaḥḥāk.² Imam al-Qurṭubī narrated in his exegesis that this verse was revealed about a group during the time of the Prophet ﷺ. This group committed terrorism and violence outside of Medina, and as a result, were subjected to a severe punishment. Al-Zamakhsharī interpreted this verse, saying,

يُحَارِبُونَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، وَمُحَارَبَةُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فِي حُكْمٍ مُحَارَبَتِهِ.

‘They wage war against the Messenger of God ﷺ, and waging war against the Muslims takes the same legal ruling as waging war against him ﷺ’.³

Citing this exact quote from al-Zamakhsharī, Abū Ḥaḍḍ al-Ḥanbalī wrote:

أَنَّ الْمَقْصُودَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحَارِبُونَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ وَإِنَّمَا ذَكَرَ اسْمَ اللَّهِ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى تَعْظِيمًا
وَتَفْخِيمًا لِمَنْ يُحَارِبُ، كَقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى: ﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ﴾.

What is meant here is that they wage war against the Messenger of God ﷺ—and God’s name was only

¹ Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, 6:214; and Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿAẓīm*, 2:51.

² Ibid.

³ Jār Allāh al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf ʿan ḥaqāʾiq ghawāmiḍ al-Tanzīl*, 1:661.

mentioned in exaltation and esteem for the one against whom war is waged, similar to the statement of God Most High, ‘*Indeed, those who pledge fealty to you are only pledging fealty to God*’. [Qur’ān 48:10]¹

This verse also implies that it is permissible to kill brigands. Al-Qāḍī Thanā’ Allāh Pānīpatī said:

أَجْمَعُوا عَلَى أَنَّ الْمُرَادَ بِالْمُحَارِبِينَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ فِي هَذِهِ الْآيَةِ قَطَاعُ الطَّرِيقِ، سَوَاءَ
كَانُوا مُسْلِمِينَ أَوْ مِنْ أَهْلِ الذِّمَّةِ. وَاتَّفَقُوا عَلَى أَنَّ مَنْ بَرَزَ وَشَهَرَ السَّلَاحَ مُخِيفًا
مُغَيِّرًا خَارِجَ الْمِصْرِ بِحَيْثُ لَا يُدْرِكُهُ الْعَوْتُ فَهُوَ مُحَارِبٌ قَاطِعٌ لِلطَّرِيقِ جَارِيَةٌ عَلَيْهِ
أَحْكَامُ هَذِهِ الْآيَةِ. . . . وَقَالَ الْبَغَوِيُّ: الْمُكَابِرُونَ فِي الْأُمُصَارِ دَاخِلُونَ فِي حُكْمِ
هَذِهِ الْآيَةِ.

They [the jurists] concurred that ‘those who wage war and sow corruption in the earth’ mentioned in the verse are the brigands, whether they are Muslims or from the non-Muslim citizens. They also agreed that the one who takes up arms for the purpose of spreading fear on the roads outside of the urban areas—as no help can reach there—is an unlawful combatant [*muḥārib*] and brigand who is subject to the rulings contained in this verse. . . . Al-Baghawī said, ‘Those who rebel within the urban areas are also subject to the ruling contained in this verse’.²

What we gather from this verse and the interpretations of the exegetes is that those who spread terror within an Islamic state must be eliminated, and those who challenge the authority of the state and take up arms against it will be subject to painful punishments in this life and the Hereafter.

13.3.5 THE KHARIJITES ARE CURSED

God says in the Qur’ān:

¹ Abū Ḥafṣ al-Ḥanbalī, *al-Lubāb fi ‘ulūm al-Kitāb*, 7:303.

² Al-Qāḍī Thanā’ Allāh Pānīpatī, *Tafsīr al-maḥzarī*, 3:86.

﴿وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَلَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ﴾

‘And those who spread corruption on the earth; for them is the curse and the worst abode’.¹

This verse refers to the Kharijites, as evidenced by the interpretation of the great Companion, Sa’d b. Abī Waqqāṣ رضي الله عنه, who said,

وَاللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ! إِنَّهُمْ الْحَرُورِيُّ.

‘By the One besides whom there is no other god, they are the Ḥarūriyya [i.e., Kharijites]!’²

The phrase ‘*corruption on the earth*’ implies the killing of peaceful citizens and the destruction of wealth and property. Abū Ḥafṣ al-Ḥanbalī reported,

قَالَ: ﴿وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ﴾ إِمَّا بِالذُّعَاءِ إِلَى غَيْرِ دِينِ اللَّهِ، وَإِمَّا بِالظُّلْمِ كَمَا فِي النَّفْسِ وَالْأَمْوَالِ وَتَخْرِيبِ الْبِلَادِ.

‘As for His statement “...and those who spread corruption on the earth”: that is either by inviting to something other than God’s religion or committing oppression, such as taking lives, destroying wealth and laying waste the land’.³

This interpretation by Abū Ḥafṣ al-Ḥanbalī (which was also reiterated by al-Rāzī in *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*) details that in addition to taking peaceful life and plundering wealth, corruption on the earth includes calling people to heretical beliefs at odds with Islam.

13.3.6 THE KHARIJITES PRESUME THAT THEY ARE PIOUS

The Kharijites of old were fervent in their prayers, fasting and recitation of the Qur’ān, and exceeded the Prophet’s Companions in these things. The modern-day Kharijites are no different from

¹ Qur’ān 13:25.

² Al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi‘ li aḥkām al-Qur’ān*, 9:314.

³ Abū Ḥafṣ al-Ḥanbalī, *al-Lubāb fī ‘ulūm al-Kitāb*, 9:425.

their predecessors in this regard. They also appear outwardly pious, and are seemingly observant of Islamic Law. Inwardly, however, they are prey to evils like extremism, radicalism and erroneous beliefs that are detrimental to the Muslim *Umma*, which lead to fighting and killing that badly damage Islam's reputation.

God says,

﴿قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِالْأَخْسَرِينَ أَعْمَالًا. الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعِيَّهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا﴾

‘Say, “Shall We inform you of those who are the greatest losers with respect to their deeds? It is those whose entire struggle is wasted in the life of this world, but they presume they are doing good”.’¹

Imam al-Ṭabarī mentioned in his exegesis that this verse was revealed regarding the People of the Book who abandoned their faith, adopted an evil path and added blameworthy innovations to their religion. A second view mentioned by al-Ṭabarī states that these losers are the Kharijites, because when Ibn al-Kawā’ the Kharijite asked ‘Alī عليه السلام about these losers, ‘Alī replied, ‘You and your ilk’. One report mentions that Abū al-Ṭufayl said, ‘Ibn al-Kawā’ the Kharijite asked ‘Alī, “Who are the greatest losers with respect to their deeds?” ‘Alī replied, “You, O Ḥārūriyya!”’² Al-Samarqandī says about the same verse,

قَالَ عَلِيُّ بْنُ أَبِي طَالِبٍ: هُمُ الْخَوَارِجُ.

‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib said, “They are the Kharijites”.’³

God also says,

﴿وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ. أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَكِنْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ﴾

¹ Qur’ān 18:103–104.

² Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, 16:33–34.

³ Al-Samarqandī, *Baḥr al-‘ulūm*, 2:364.

‘And when it is said to them, “Do not spread corruption on the earth”, they say, “We are only reformers”. Beware, it is they who truly spread corruption, although they perceive it not’,¹

and,

﴿أَفَمَنْ زُيِّنَ لَهُ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ فَرَآهُ حَسَنًا﴾

‘So [what about him] whose evil action has been made attractive to him and he considers it good?’²

Abū Ḥafṣ al-Ḥanbalī said,

قَالَ قَتَادَةُ: مِنْهُمْ الْخَوَارِجُ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَحِلُّونَ دِمَاءَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ.

‘Qatāda said, “Amongst them are the Kharijites who declare lawful the blood and wealth of the Muslims”.’³

13.4 THE APPEARANCE OF THE KHARIJITES DURING THE TIME OF THE PROPHET ﷺ

The turmoil of the Kharijites began during the time of the Prophet ﷺ. Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه said,

بَيْنَا النَّبِيُّ ﷺ يَقْسِمُ ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ قِسْمًا فَقَالَ ذُو الْخُوَيْصِرَةِ: رَجُلٌ مِنْ بَنِي تَمِيمٍ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، اعْدِلْ. قَالَ: وَيَلَكَ، مَنْ يَعْدِلُ إِذَا لَمْ أَعْدِلْ! فَقَالَ عُمَرُ: إِنَّدُنْ لِي فَلَا ضَرْبَ غَنَقَةٍ، قَالَ: لَا، إِنَّ لَهُ أَصْحَابًا يَحْقِرُ أَحَدُكُمْ صَلَاتَهُ مَعَ صَلَاتِهِمْ، وَصِيَامَهُ مَعَ صِيَامِهِمْ، يَمْرُقُونَ مِنَ الدِّينِ كَمُرُوقِ السَّهْمِ مِنَ الرَّمِيَةِ.

‘When the Prophet ﷺ was apportioning the war booty, Dhū al-Khuwayṣira, a man from Banū Tamīm, said, “O Messenger of God! Be just!” The Prophet ﷺ said, “Woe to you! Who will be just if I am not just?” ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه said, “[O Messenger of God!] Give me permission to strike his neck!” The Prophet ﷺ said,

¹ Qur’ān 2:111–112.

² Ibid., 35:8.

³ Abū Ḥafṣ al-Ḥanbalī, *al-Lubāb fī ‘ulūm al-Kitāb*, 13:175.

“Leave him, for he has compatriots; and you will belittle your prayers and fasting in comparison to theirs, but they shall pass through the religion just as an arrow passes through a hunted game”.¹

13.5 THE LEGACY OF THE KHARIJITES BEGAN WITH DISRESPECT TO THE PROPHET ﷺ

It was Dhū al-Khuwayṣira’s disrespect to the Prophet ﷺ that laid the foundation for one of the worst trials faced by the *Umma*. And the militants and rebels who revolted against the authority of ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī were a continuation of the evil precedent set by Dhū al-Khuwayṣira.

Imam Abū Bakr al-Ājurrī wrote about this issue in his book *Kitāb al-sharī‘a* and penned a chapter called, ‘On the Condemnation of the Kharijites and Their Evil Way, and the Permissibility of Killing them, and the Reward for the One Who Either Kills them or is Killed By Them’. In it he stated:

أَوَّلُ قَرْنٍ طَلَعَ مِنْهُمْ عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ: هُوَ رَجُلٌ طَعَنَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ ﷺ، وَهُوَ يَقْسِمُ الْغَنَائِمَ بِالْجَعْرَانَةِ، فَقَالَ: اْعْدِلْ يَا مُحَمَّدُ، فَمَا أَرَاكَ تَعْدِلُ، فَقَالَ ﷺ: وَيْلَكَ، فَمَنْ يَعْدِلُ إِذَا لَمْ أَكُنْ أَعْدِلُ؟

The first of them to appear was during the time of the Messenger of God ﷺ, and he was a man who accused the Prophet ﷺ of injustice as he apportioned the war booty at Ja‘rāna. He said, ‘O Muhammad! Be just, for I don’t think you are acting fairly’. So the Messenger of God ﷺ replied, ‘Woe to you! Who will be just if I am not just?’

¹ Narrated by al-Bukhārī in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ: Kitāb al-adab* [The Book of Good Manners], chapter: ‘What Has Come to Us About Someone Saying, “Woe to you!”’, 5:2281 §5811, and *Kitāb istitāba al-murtaddīn wa al-mu‘ānidīn wa qitālīhim* [The Book on Demanding the Repentance of the Apostates and Reprobates, and Fighting Them], chapter: ‘On the One Who Refrains from Fighting the Kharijites for the Sake of Drawing Hearts Near and so People Will Not Flee’, 6:2540 §6534; and Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ: Kitāb al-Zakāt* [The Book of Zakat], chapter: ‘On the Kharijites and Their Qualities’, 2:744 §1064.

Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī mentioned a report from ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī who said,

ذُو الْخُوَيْصِرَةِ التَّمِيمِيُّ وَهُوَ حُرْقُوصُ بْنُ زُهَيْرٍ، أَصْلُ الْخَوَارِجِ.

‘Dhū al-Khuwayṣira al-Tamīmī’s real name was Ḥurqūṣ b. Zuhayr and he was the founder of the Kharijites’.¹

Thus, the later-day Kharijites had the same mindset as their founder. Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī writes,

قَالَ الذَّهَبِيُّ: ذُو الْخُوَيْصِرَةِ الْقَائِلُ، فَقَالَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، إِعْدِلْ. يُقَالُ هُوَ حُرْقُوصُ بْنُ زُهَيْرٍ، رَأْسُ الْخَوَارِجِ، قُتِلَ فِي الْخَوَارِجِ يَوْمَ النَّهْرِ. . . . وَفِي تَفْسِيرِ الشَّعَالِيِّ: بَيْنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَفْسِمُ غَنَائِمَ هَوَازِنَ، جَاءَهُ ذُو الْخُوَيْصِرَةِ التَّمِيمِيُّ، أَصْلُ الْخَوَارِجِ.

Al-Dhahabī said, ‘Dhu al-Khuwayṣira, the one who said, “O Messenger of God! Be just”, is said to be Ḥurqūṣ b. Zuhayr, and he was the head of the Kharijites and was amongst the Kharijites who were slain during the Battle of al-Nahr. . . .’² In the exegesis of al-Thaʿlabī it is mentioned that ‘when the Messenger of God ﷺ was apportioning the war booty of Hawāzin, Dhū al-Khuwayṣira al-Tamīmī, the head of the Kharijites, came to him. . .’³

13.6 THE IDEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE KHARIJITES DURING THE REIGN OF ʿUTHMĀN B. ʿAFFĀN ﷺ

Many disruptions erupted in the *Umma* after the passing of the Prophet ﷺ. They include false claims to prophethood, apostasy, refusal to pay Zakat and rejection of several other basic teachings of Islam. Those who embraced the beliefs of the Kharijites promoted their warped understanding, exploited these disruptions and began organizing themselves. Those who actively hatched the conspiracy against ʿUthmān, and ultimately killed him in the final

¹ Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī*, 12:292; and *al-Iṣāba fī tamyīz al-Ṣaḥāba*, 2:49.

² Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī in *ʿUmdat al-qārī*, 15:62.

³ Ibid., 16:142.

days of his rule, were composed of those who held the extremist beliefs of the Kharijites. The most prominent of them was one ʿAbd Allāh b. Sabā. This was the first time an extremist and terrorist group challenged the authority of the Islamic state.

Imam al-Ḥākim mentioned an episode of Ḥusayn b. Khārīja, who said,

لَمَّا كَانَتِ الْفِتْنَةُ الْأُولَى أَشْكَلَتْ عَلَيَّ فَقُلْتُ: االلَّهُمَّ ارْنِي أَمْرًا مِنْ أَمْرِ الْحَقِّ أَتَمَسَّكَ بِهِ. قَالَ: فَأَرَيْتُ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةَ وَبَيْنَهُمَا حَائِطٌ غَيْرُ طَوِيلٍ، وَإِذَا أَنَا بِجَانِزٍ فَقُلْتُ: لَوْ تَشَبَّهْتُ بِهَذَا الْجَانِزِ لَعَلِّي أَهْبِطُ إِلَى قَتْلَى أَشْجَع لِيُخْبِرُونِي. قَالَ: فَهَبَطْتُ بِأَرْضِ ذَاتِ شَحْرِ وَإِذَا أَنَا بِنَعْرِ جُلُوسٍ فَقُلْتُ: أَنْتُمْ الشُّهَدَاءُ؟ قَالُوا: لَا نَحْنُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ. قُلْتُ: فَأَيْنَ الشُّهَدَاءُ؟ قَالُوا: تَقَدَّمْ إِلَى الدَّرَجَاتِ الْعُلَى إِلَى مُحَمَّدٍ ﷺ، فَتَقَدَّمْتُ فَإِذَا أَنَا بِدَرَجَةِ اللَّهِ أَعْلَمُ مَا هِيَ السَّعَةُ وَالْحُسْنُ. فَإِذَا أَنَا بِمُحَمَّدٍ ﷺ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَهُوَ يَقُولُ لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: اسْتَغْفِرْ لِأُمَّتِي. فَقَالَ لَهُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: إِنَّكَ لَا تَدْرِي مَا أَحْدَثُوا بَعْدَكَ؟ أَرَأَيْتَ دِمَاءَهُمْ وَقَتَلُوا إِمَامَهُمْ، أَلَا فَعَلُوا كَمَا فَعَلَ خَلِيلِي سَعْدٌ. قُلْتُ: أَرَأَيْتَ قَدْ أَرَيْتُ أَذْهَبُ إِلَى سَعْدٍ، فَأَنْظُرُ مَعَ مَنْ هُوَ، فَأَكُونُ مَعَهُ فَأَتَيْتُهُ، فَقَصَصْتُ عَلَيْهِ الرُّؤْيَا، فَمَا أَكْثَرَ بِهَا فَرْحًا. وَقَالَ: قَدْ شَقِيَ مَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ خَلِيلًا. قُلْتُ: فِي أَيِّ الطَّائِفَتَيْنِ أَنْتَ؟ قَالَ: لَسْتُ مَعَ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا. قُلْتُ: فَكَيْفَ تَأْمُرُنِي؟ قَالَ: أَلَكَ مَاشِيَةٌ؟ قُلْتُ: لَا. قَالَ: فَاشْتَرِ مَاشِيَةً وَاعْتَرِلْ فِيهَا حَتَّى تَنْجَلِي.

‘During the first outbreak of turmoil, I was confused, so I said, “O God! Show me something of the truth that I may hold fast to it”. So I was shown the world and the Hereafter [in a dream], and there was a wall between the two that was not very tall and suddenly I was over it. I said, “If I continue to be suspended over this, I might fall upon those slain at Ashjaʿ, so they can inform me”. So I descended on to a land, green and fresh with vegetation, and there was a group sitting, whom I asked, “Are you martyrs?” They said, “No, we are angels”. I said, “So

where are the martyrs?” They said, “Go towards the higher levels up to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ”. Then I advanced until I reached a level, and its beauty and vastness was indescribable. Upon reaching this level, suddenly I saw the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and Abraham ؑ and he [Muhammad ﷺ] was saying to Abraham, “Seek forgiveness for my *Umma*”. Abraham said to him, “You do not know what blameworthy things they did after you. They shed their blood and killed their ruler; why don’t they do what my friend Sa’d did?” I said to myself that what God has shown me leads me to visit Sa’d. So I went to him and told him my dream. He felt glad and said, “Wretched is he who does not have Abraham as a friend!” I asked him, “So to which of the two factions do you belong?” He replied, “I am with neither”. Then I asked him, “So what is your advice to me?” He said, “Do you have any cattle?” I said, “No”. He said, “Go and buy some cattle and withdraw until things become clear”.¹

In Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr’s *al-Tamhīd*² and Ibn Ḥajar’s *al-Iṣāba*³ there is described what has been called the ‘first tribulation’, which is the turmoil that ensued when ‘Uthmān ؓ was assassinated. The people of sedition divided into two groups and were the ones who initiated bloodshed and added blameworthy innovations to the religion. It was that band of extremists who laid down the foundation for the Kharijites after the Battle of Ṣiffīn during the reign of ‘Alī ؓ.

13.7 THE KHARIJITES DURING THE REIGN OF ‘ALĪ B. ABI ṬĀLIB ؓ

The major objective of the Kharijites is to destabilize the foundations of the Muslim state in the name of the religion. When

¹ Narrated by al-Ḥākim in *al-Mustadrak*, 4:499 §8394; and cited by Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr in *al-Tamhīd*, 19:222; and al-Dhahabī in *Siyar a‘lām al-nubalā’*, 1:120.

² Cited by Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr in *al-Tamhīd*, 19:222.

³ Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *al-Iṣāba fī tamyīz al-Ṣaḥāba*, 2:172 §1979.

we look critically at the history of the Kharijites, we see that theirs was a violent movement that was against dialogue and peaceful settlement of disputes, such as the policy that ‘Alī (عليه السلام), the fourth Rightly Guided Caliph, adopted in the form of arbitration before the Battle of Šiffīn. As long as the clamour of war prevailed, the Kharijite elements in ‘Alī’s army were active, but the moment he decided to seek arbitration for the sake of avoiding further bloodshed, they rejected his decision and deserted his troops. Calling him a disbeliever, they organized a terrorist rebellion group and rose against him and the Muslim *Umma* in the name of jihad. When they organized themselves, their motto and call was, ‘There is no judgement but for God’. When ‘Alī heard their slogan he said,

كَلِمَةُ حَقٍّ أُرِيدَ بِهَا بَاطِلٌ.

‘A word of truth by which falsehood is intended’.¹

In some collections ‘Alī is reported to have said,

إِنْ سَكَتُوا غَمَمْنَاهُمْ، وَإِنْ تَكَلَّمُوا حَبَبْنَاهُمْ، وَإِنْ خَرَجُوا عَلَيْنَا قَاتَلْنَاهُمْ.

‘If they are quiet we will overwhelm them, and if they speak we will talk to them with logic, and if they rebel against us we will fight them’.²

The Kharijites initiated an armed rebellion against ‘Alī and based themselves in Ḥarūrā, located on the Iraqi border. They accused him of polytheism and blameworthy innovations and declared him a disbeliever and rebelled against him. This would prove to be the start of their mass killing and terrorism. They argued,

تُحَكِّمُونَ فِي أَمْرِ اللَّهِ الرَّجَالَ؟ لَا حُكْمَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ!

¹ Narrated by Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ: Kitāb al-Zakāt* [The Book of Zakat], chapter: ‘The Encouragement to Kill the Kharijites’, 2:749 §1066; al-Nasā’ī in *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 5:160 §8562; Ibn Abī Shayba in *al-Muṣannaf*, 7:557 §37907; and al-Bayhaqī in *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 8:171 §16478.

² Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh*, 3:212–213; al-Ṭabarī, *Ṭārīkh al-umam wa al-mulūk*, 3:114.

‘Do you seek judgment from men in that which is God’s command? There is no judgment but for God!’¹

A leader of Kharijites, Yazīd b. ‘Āṣim al-Muḥāribī, delivered a sermon, saying,

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ غَيْرَ مُودَّعٍ رَبَّنَا وَلَا مُسْتَعْنٍ عَنْهُ. اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّا نَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ اِعْطَاءِ الدِّيَّةِ فِي دِيْنِنَا، فَاِنْ اِعْطَاءَ الدِّيَّةِ فِي الدِّيْنِ اِذْهَانٌ فِي اَمْرِ اللّٰهِ، وَذُلٌّ رَّاجِعٌ بِاَهْلِهِ اِلَى سَخَطِ اللّٰهِ. يَا عَلِيُّ، اَبَالَقْتَلِ تُخَوِّفُنَا؟ اَمَّا وَاللّٰهِ، اِنِّيْ لَأَرْجُوْ اَنْ نَضْرِبَكُمْ بِهَا عَمَّا قَلِيْلٍ غَيْرِ مُصَفَّحَاتٍ، ثُمَّ لَتَعْلَمُ اَيْنَا اَوْلٰى بِهَا صَلِيًّا.

‘All praise is for God alone. We cannot give it up. O God! We seek refuge from any weakness or fawning flattery in matters of the religion, because that brings humiliation, which will lead to God’s wrath. O ‘Alī! Would you have us fear death? Beware! By God, I hope that we will kill you with the edge of the sword. Then, you will come to know who amongst us deserves torment the most!’²

Similarly, another leader of the Kharijites said in his sermon,

اُخْرِجُوا بَنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ الطَّالِمِ اَهْلُهَا اِلَى بَعْضِ كُوَرِ الْجِبَالِ اَوْ اِلَى بَعْضِ هَذِهِ الْمَدَائِنِ مُنْكَرِيْنَ لِهَذِهِ الْبِدْعِ الْمُضِلَّةِ.

‘Leave with us and let us abandon this city of oppressors and head for the mountains or some of the other cities, while detesting these blameworthy and misguided innovations’.³

When the prominent leaders of the Kharijites gathered in the house of Shurayḥ b. Awfā al-‘Abasī, Ibn Wahb said, addressing the gathering,

اِسْخَصُّوْا بَنَا اِلَى بَلَدَةٍ نَجْتَمِعُ فِيْهَا لِاِنْقَادِ حُكْمِ اللّٰهِ، فَاِنَّكُمْ اَهْلُ الْحَقِّ.

¹ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh*, 3:196.

² Ibid., 3:313.

³ Ibid., 3:313-314.

‘Let us come together and head for a land where we will carry out the law of God, for you are the people of the truth’.¹

In their response to ‘Alī’s letter addressed to them, the Kharijites wrote,

إِنَّكَ لَمْ تَغْضَبْ لِرَبِّكَ وَإِنَّمَا غَضِبْتَ لِنَفْسِكَ، فَإِنْ شَهِدْتَ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ بِالْكَفْرِ
وَاسْتَقْبَلْتَ التَّوْبَةَ، نَظَرْنَا فِيْمَا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكَ، وَإِلَّا فَقَدْ نَبَذْنَاكَ عَلَى سَوَاءٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
لَا يُحِبُّ الْخَائِنِينَ.

‘Indeed, you were not angry for the sake of your Lord; you were angry for the sake of your ego. Now, if you confess that you fell into disbelief and repent, we will look into the matter that is between you and us; otherwise, we reject you, and indeed, God does not love the deceitful’.²

This letter and the sermons by the Kharijites indicate that, in their opposition to ‘Alī, they considered themselves to be the paragons of righteousness and truth and considered ‘Alī a purveyor of polytheism and blameworthy innovation (and God’s refuge is sought from such a notion!). They were so earnest in their hatred of polytheism and blameworthy innovation that they deserted ‘Alī’s city and claimed that it was an abode of disbelief. They would take to the mountains and wastelands and ambush travelers and they would catch hold of their opponents and torture them to death.

Later, ‘Alī formed an army of Companions to launch military offensives against them in order to eliminate them completely and restore peace and security and establish the authority of the government. They were finally defeated as the Prophet ﷺ had prophesied and ordered. Imam Muslim and others reported from Zayd b. Wahb al-Juhānī, who was amongst ‘Alī’s army that fought against the Kharijites:

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., 3:217.

قَالَ عَلِيٌّ (عليه السلام): أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، إِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ: يَخْرُجُ قَوْمٌ مِنْ أُمَّتِي يَقْرَأُونَ الْقُرْآنَ لَيْسَ قِرَاءَتُكُمْ إِلَى قِرَاءَتِهِمْ بِشَيْءٍ، وَلَا صَلَاتُكُمْ إِلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ بِشَيْءٍ، وَلَا صِيَامُكُمْ إِلَى صِيَامِهِمْ بِشَيْءٍ، يَقْرَأُونَ الْقُرْآنَ يَحْسِبُونَ أَنَّهُ لَهُمْ وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِمْ، لَا تُجَاوِزُ صَلَاتُهُمْ تَرَاقِيَهُمْ، يَمُرُقُونَ مِنَ الْإِسْلَامِ كَمَا يَمُرُقُ السَّهْمُ مِنَ الرَّمِيَةِ. لَوْ يَعْلَمُ الْجَيْشُ الَّذِينَ يُصَيِّبُونَهُمْ مَا قُضِيَ لَهُمْ عَلَى لِسَانِ نَبِيِّهِمْ ﷺ لَا تَكَلُّوا عَنِ الْعَمَلِ وَآيَةُ ذَلِكَ أَنَّ فِيهِمْ رَجُلًا لَهُ عَصَدٌ وَلَيْسَ لَهُ ذِرَاعٌ عَلَى رَأْسِ عَصَدِهِ مِثْلُ حَلْمَةِ النَّدَى عَلَيْهِ شَعْرَاتٌ بَيْضٌ. فَتَذْهَبُونَ إِلَى مُعَاوِيَةَ وَأَهْلِ الشَّامِ وَتَتَرَكُونَ هَؤُلَاءِ يَخْلُقُونَكُمْ فِي ذَرَارِيكُمْ وَأَمْوَالِكُمْ، وَاللَّهِ، إِنِّي لَأَرْجُو أَنْ يَكُونَ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمُ فَإِنَّهُمْ قَدْ سَفَكُوا الدَّمَ الْحَرَامَ وَأَغَارُوا فِي سَرَحِ النَّاسِ فَسَيُرُوا عَلَى اسْمِ اللَّهِ.

قَالَ سَلَمَةُ بْنُ كُهَيْلٍ فَتَزَلِّي زَيْدُ بْنُ وَهْبٍ مُتَزِلًا حَتَّى قَالَ مَرَرْنَا عَلَى قَنْطَرَةٍ فَلَمَّا التَّقَيْنَا وَعَلَى الْخَوَارِجِ يَوْمِنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ وَهْبٍ الرَّاسِيُّ فَقَالَ لَهُمْ: أَلْقُوا الرَّمَاحَ وَسَلُّوا سُيُوفَكُمْ مِنْ جُفُونِهَا فَإِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يُنَاشِدُوكُمْ كَمَا نَاشَدُوكُمْ يَوْمَ حُرُورَاءَ، فَرَجَعُوا فَوَحَّشُوا بِرِمَاحِهِمْ وَسَلُّوا السُّيُوفَ وَشَجَرَهُمُ النَّاسُ بِرِمَاحِهِمْ. قَالَ: وَقَتِلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَمَا أُصِيبَ مِنَ النَّاسِ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ عَلِيٍّ يَوْمِنَا إِلَّا رَجُلَانِ. فَقَالَ عَلِيٌّ (عليه السلام): ائْتَمِسُوا فِيهِمُ الْمُخَدَجَ فَالْتَمِسُوهُ فَلَمْ يَجِدُوهُ، فَقَامَ عَلِيٌّ (عليه السلام) بِنَفْسِهِ حَتَّى أَتَى نَاسًا قَدْ قُتِلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ قَالَ: أَخْرَوْهُمْ فَوَجَدُوهُ مِمَّا يَلِي الْأَرْضَ فَكَبَّرَ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: صَدَقَ اللَّهُ، وَبَلَغَ رَسُولُهُ. قَالَ: فَقَامَ إِلَيْهِ عُبَيْدَةُ السَّلْمَانِيُّ فَقَالَ: يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ! هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ! حَتَّى اسْتَحْلَفَهُ ثَلَاثًا، وَهُوَ يَخْلِفُ لَهُ. فَقَالَ: أَيُّ وَاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ! حَتَّى اسْتَحْلَفَهُ ثَلَاثًا، وَهُوَ يَخْلِفُ لَهُ.

‘Ali said, “O people! Indeed, I heard God’s Messenger ﷺ say, ‘There shall be a folk that comes from my *Umma* and they will recite the Qur’ān—your recitation will not be comparable to theirs, or your prayers or your fasting to theirs. They will recite the Qur’ān and believe it supports them but [in reality] it is against them. Their prayers will not go past their throats, and they shall exit from

the religion just as an arrow exits from a hunted game. If only the army who encounters them knew what has been decreed for them upon the tongue of their Prophet ﷺ, they would rely on it [and cease doing other deeds]. Their [i.e., the Kharijites'] distinctive sign is that there is a man amongst them, one of whose arms is like a woman's breast, or a piece of meat palpitating and with some white hairs'. [‘Ali continued:] You will be marching towards Mu‘āwiya and the inhabitants of the Levant and will leave these folk behind amongst your children and properties! By God, I most certainly hope that they are these people [mentioned in the hadith], for they have shed inviolable blood and raided the people's belongings. So go forth [against them] in the name of God”.’

Salama b. Kuhayl said, “Zayd b. Wahb took me to a place in which to stay until we crossed the bridge. ‘Abd Allāh b. Wahb al-Rāsibī was the head of the Kharijites on that day and he said to his army, ‘Cast down your spears and unsheathe your swords, for I fear that they will attack you as they attacked you on the Day of Ḥārūrā”.’ So they cast down their spears, drew their swords, and people fought them with spears until they were killed. Only two soldiers of ‘Alī’s army were killed on that day. ‘Alī ﷺ said, ‘Search for the maimed one [Dhū al-Khuwayṣira] amongst the slain’. They searched but did not find him. ‘Alī then stood up and [walked] until he came upon a pile of bodies from the enemy. He ordered, ‘Search them’. They removed the bodies and found him at the bottom of the pile. ‘Alī ﷺ then cried out, ‘God is the Greatest! God spoke the truth and His Messenger conveyed the message!’ Then there stood before him ‘Ubayda al-Salmānī who said, ‘O Commander of the Faithful! By God, besides whom there is no other god. Did you hear this [description] from the Messenger of God ﷺ?’ ‘Alī replied, ‘Yes, by God, besides whom there is no other god’. ‘Ubayda sought an oath from him three times and

each time he swore by God”.’

There are other related hadith reports that describe this man’s handicap as a distinguishing mark. In one report it mentions that he would be of dark complexion and have a hand like a women’s breast. In that report it states that when our master ‘Alī defeated them, he said, ‘Search for the one with this sign’. When they continued to look and could not find him, ‘Alī said twice or thrice, ‘By my Lord! I have neither lied nor been told something false’. The people eventually found the body in a barren place and brought it before ‘Alī. ‘Ubayd Allāh—the narrator—said, ‘I was with ‘Alī the entire time and his statement was regarding the Kharijites’.¹

Jundub b. ‘Abd Allāh ؓ said,

لَمَّا فَارَقَتِ الْخَوَارِجُ عَلِيًّا ؓ خَرَجَ فِي طَلَبِهِمْ وَخَرَجْنَا مَعَهُ، فَانْتَهَيْنَا إِلَى عَسْكَرِ الْقَوْمِ فَإِذَا لَهُمْ دَوِيٌّ كَدَوِيٍّ النَّحْلِ مِنْ قِرَاءَةِ الْقُرْآنِ، وَفِيهِمْ أَصْحَابُ الثَّقَنَاتِ وَأَصْحَابُ الْبِرَانِسِ، فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُمْ دَخَلَنِي مِنْ ذَلِكَ شِدَّةٌ، فَتَنَحَّيْتُ فَرَكَزْتُ رُمَحِي وَنَزَلْتُ عَنْ فَرَسِي وَوَضَعْتُ بُرْنُسِي، فَتَشَرْتُ عَلَيْهِ دِرْعِي، وَأَخَذْتُ بِمَقْوَدِ فَرَسِي فَقُمْتُ أُصَلِّي إِلَى رُمَحِي وَأَنَا أَقُولُ فِي صَلَاتِي: اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنْ كَانَ قِتَالُ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ لَكَ طَاعَةٌ، فَأَذَنْ لِي فِيهِ، وَإِنْ كَانَ مَعْصِيَةً فَأَرِنِي بَرَاءَتَكَ. فَأَنَا كَذَلِكَ إِذَا أَقْبَلَ عَلَيَّ بُنْ أَبِي طَالِبٍ ؓ عَلَى بَغْلَةٍ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ. فَلَمَّا حَاذَانِي قَالَ: تَعَوَّذْ بِاللَّهِ يَا جُنْدُبُ، مِنْ شَرِّ الشَّكِّ. فَجِئْتُ أَسْعَى إِلَيْهِ، وَنَزَلْتُ، فَقَامَ يُصَلِّي إِذَا أَقْبَلَ رَجُلٌ عَلَى بَرْدُونٍ يَقْرُبُ بِهِ. فَقَالَ: يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ. قَالَ: مَا شَأْنُكَ؟ قَالَ: حَاجَةٌ فِي الْقَوْمِ. قَالَ: وَمَا ذَاكَ؟ قَالَ: قَدْ قَطَعُوا النَّهْرَ، فَذَهَبُوا، قُلْتُ: اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ. فَقَالَ عَلِيٌّ ؓ: مَا قَطَعُوهُ، ثُمَّ جَاءَ آخَرٌ يَسْتَحْضِرُ بِفَرَسِهِ. فَقَالَ: يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ. قَالَ: مَا تَشَاءُ؟ قَالَ: أَلَكِ حَاجَةٌ فِي الْقَوْمِ؟ قَالَ وَمَا ذَاكَ؟ قَالَ: قَدْ قَطَعُوا النَّهْرَ. فَقَالَ عَلِيٌّ ؓ: مَا قَطَعُوهُ

¹ Narrated by Muslim in *al-Shāḥiḥ: Kitāb al-Zakāt* [The Book of Zakat], chapter: ‘The Encouragement to Kill the Kharijites’, 2:748 §1066; Abū Dāwūd in *al-Sunan: Kitāb al-Sunna*, chapter: ‘On Fighting the Kharijites’, 4:244 §4768; al-Nasā’i in *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 5:163 §8571; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal in *al-Musnad*, 1:91 §706; ‘Abd al-Razzāq in *al-Muṣannaḥ*, 10:147; and al-Bazzār in *al-Musnad*, 2:197 §581.

وَلَا يَقْطَعُوهُ، وَلَيَقْتُلَنَّ دُونَهُ عَهْدٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَرَسُولِهِ ﷺ. ثُمَّ رَكِبَ، فَقَالَ لِي: يَا جُنْدُبُ، أَمَا أَنَا فَأَبْعَثُ إِلَيْهِمْ رَجُلًا يَقْرَأَ الْمُصْحَفَ، يَدْعُو إِلَى كِتَابِ رَبِّهِمْ وَسُنَّةِ نَبِيِّهِمْ، فَلَا يُقْبَلُ عَلَيْنَا بِوَجْهِهِ حَتَّى يَرْشُقُوهُ بِالْبَلْلِ، يَا جُنْدُبُ، أَمَا أَنَّهُ لَا يُقْتَلُ مِنَّا عَشْرَةٌ وَلَا يَنْجُو مِنْهُمْ عَشْرَةٌ. ثُمَّ قَالَ: مَنْ يَأْخُذْ هَذَا الْمُصْحَفَ فَيَمْشِي بِهِ إِلَى هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ فَيَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى كِتَابِ رَبِّهِمْ وَسُنَّةِ نَبِيِّهِمْ وَهُوَ مَقْتُولٌ وَلَهُ الْجَنَّةُ؟ فَلَمْ يُجِبْهُ إِلَّا شَابٌّ مِنْ بَنِي عَامِرِ بْنِ صَعْصَعَةَ. فَقَالَ لَهُ عَلِيٌّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: خُذْ. فَأَخَذَ الْمُصْحَفَ، فَقَالَ: أَمَا إِنَّكَ مَقْتُولٌ، وَلَسْتُ تُقْبَلُ عَلَيْنَا بِوَجْهِكَ حَتَّى يَرْشُقُوكَ بِالْبَلْلِ. فَخَرَجَ الشَّابُّ يَمْشِي بِالْمُصْحَفِ إِلَى الْقَوْمِ، فَلَمَّا دَنَا مِنْهُمْ حَيْثُ سَمِعُوا قَامُوا وَنَسَبُوا الْقِتَالَ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْجِعَ، قَالَ: فَرَمَاهُ إِنْسَانٌ، فَأَقْبَلَ عَلَيْنَا بِوَجْهِهِ، فَقَعَدَ فَقَالَ عَلِيٌّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: دُونَكُمْ الْقَوْمُ. قَالَ جُنْدُبُ: فَقَتَلْتُ بِكَفِّي هَذِهِ ثَمَانِيَةَ قَبْلَ أَنْ أَصْلِيَ الظُّهْرَ وَمَا قُبِلَ مِنَّا عَشْرَةٌ وَلَا نَجَا مِنْهُمْ عَشْرَةٌ.

‘When the Kharijites seceded from ‘Alī, he went out in pursuit of them and we went with him. When we reached their troops, we heard a loud recitation of the Qur’ān that sounded like the buzzing of bees. Amongst them were some wearing loin cloths and mantles, and seeing them in that state [of ostensible piety], I had mixed feelings about fighting against them. I stuck my spear into the ground, dismounted from my steed, took off my mantle and spread it out and placed my armour on it. I then took my steed by the reigns and started praying towards my spear [as a barrier]. During my prayer I said, “O God! If it is obedience to You to fight these folk, then give me permission to do it; and if it is disobedience, then show me a sign of Your disapproval”. As I was in that state of entreaty, suddenly, ‘Alī b. Abī Tālib came, riding the Prophet’s mule. After he came close to me he said, “O Jundub! Seek refuge with God from the evil of doubt!” I then hastened to come closer to him, but he dismounted and began to pray. Suddenly, someone on a galloping horse approached and said, “O Commander of

the Faithful!” ‘Alī said, “What is the matter?” The rider said, “They have all crossed the stream and got away”. I said, “God is the Greatest”. ‘Alī said, “They have not crossed it, and will not do it. It is the promise of God and His Messenger that they will be killed”. Then he mounted his steed and said, “O Jundub! I shall send someone to them who will recite the Qur’ān to them and invite them to the Book of their Lord and the Sunna of their Prophet ﷺ. He will not turn to us [to signal the attack] until they shoot arrows at him. O Jundub! Less than ten will be slain amongst us and less than ten will survive amongst them”. Then he said, “So who will take this copy of the Qur’ān to those folk and invite them to the Book of their Lord and the Sunna of their Prophet ﷺ and get killed and earn Paradise?” No one responded to his call except a young man from Banū ‘Āmir b. Ṣaṣaṣ. ‘Alī said to him, “Take [this copy of the Qur’ān]”. And so the young man took it and ‘Alī said to him, “You will be killed and will not turn to us until they shoot you with arrows”. The young man walked towards the encampment of the folk, carrying a copy of the Qur’ān. When he reached a place where they could hear, one of them shot him with an arrow. He then turned towards us and sat down. ‘Alī then said, “Now attack them”. I killed eight of them with this hand of mine before I prayed the Afternoon Prayer and less than ten amongst us were slain and less than ten amongst them survived’.¹

As you see, Jundub was affected by the ostensible piety, asceticism and worship of the Kharijites. Despite that, all their distinguishing marks that ‘Alī told of proved true.

Ṭāriq b. Ziyād said,

خَرَجْنَا مَعَ عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ إِلَى الْخَوَارِجِ فَقَتَلَهُمْ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: انْظُرُوا فَإِنَّ نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:

¹ Narrated by al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Muḥjam al-awsaṭ*, 4:227 §4051; and cited by al-Haythamī in *Majma‘ al-zawā'id*, 4:227; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī in *Fath al-Bārī*, 12:296; and al-Shawkānī in *Nayl al-awṭār*, 7:349.

إِنَّهُ سَيَخْرُجُ قَوْمٌ يَتَكَلَّمُونَ بِالْحَقِّ لَا يُجَاوِزُ خَلْقَهُمْ، يَخْرُجُونَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ كَمَا يَخْرُجُ
السَّهْمُ مِنَ الرَّمِيَّةِ، سَيَمَاهُمُ أَنَّ فِيهِمْ رَجُلًا أَسْوَدَ مُخْدَجَ الْيَدِ، فِي يَدِهِ شَعْرَاتٌ سَوْدٌ،
إِنْ كَانَ هُوَ فَقَدْ قَتَلْتُمْ شَرَّ النَّاسِ وَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ هُوَ فَقَدْ قَتَلْتُمْ خَيْرَ النَّاسِ. فَبَكَيْنَا.
ثُمَّ قَالَ: اطْلُبُوا. فَطَلَبْنَا، فَوَجَدْنَا الْمُخْدَجَ، فَخَرَرْنَا سُجُودًا وَخَرَّ عَلَيَّ ﷺ مَعَنَا.

‘We went out with ‘Alī ﷺ to pursue the Kharijites and he slew them. Then he said, “Take a close look, for the Prophet of God ﷺ said, ‘There shall emerge a folk who speak the truth but it will not pass their throats. They shall leave the truth just as an arrow exits a hunted game. Their distinguishing trait is that there is amongst them a man of dark complexion with a deformed hand with black hairs on it’. If it is him, then you have killed the most evil of the people, and if it is not, then you have killed the best of the people”. We then began to cry and then he said, “Look for him”. We looked for him and found him with a deformed hand, so we fell into prostration [in gratitude] and ‘Alī ﷺ prostrated with us’.¹

13.8 THE BELIEFS OF THE KHARIJITES

The preceding discussion has shown us that sometimes crooked and short-sighted people emerge in society with compound ignorance concerning the wisdom and vision of the religion. They strictly observe the outward religious acts, which in turn instil them with the conceited belief that they are staunch Muslims and true embodiments of Islam. They feel themselves near to God and consider all others either disbelievers or disobedient. They believe it is their right to force others to adhere to the path of righteousness and they forget God’s words,

﴿ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ﴾

¹ Narrated by al-Nasā’ī in *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 5:161 §8566; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal in *al-Musnad*, 1:107 §848, and *Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥāba*, 2:714 §1224; and cited by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī in *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 14:362 §7689; and al-Marwazī in *Ta’zīm qadr al-ṣalāh*, 1:256 §247.

‘Invite to the path of your Lord with wisdom and goodly invitation’,¹

and,

﴿لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ﴾

‘There is no compulsion in the religion’.²

Satan plants the seeds of arrogance in their hearts, which in turn cause them to see themselves as pure Muslims and others as impure, if Muslims at all. They believe that it is their right to force others to believe what they believe, and because Satan has moulded them and shaped them with the idea that they are peerless, they are convinced that they are free to use whatever means at their disposal to either bring wayward Muslims back to the right path or eliminate them.

This mindset allows them to kill people, spread terror and plunder wealth and property without fear of sin. According to their warped understanding, whatever crimes they do are jihad. The Qur’ān informs us that they will be the greatest of losers in the Hereafter:

﴿قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِالْأَخْسَرِينَ أَعْمَالًا. الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعْيُهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا﴾

‘Say, “Shall We inform you of those who are the greatest losers with respect to their deeds? It is those whose entire struggle is wasted in the life of this world, but they presume they are doing good”.’³

Imam al-Shahrastānī said about the false beliefs and ideologies of Kharijites:

كِبَارُ فِرْقِ الْخَوَارِجِ سِتَّةٌ: الْأَزَارِقَةُ وَالتَّجْدَاتُ وَالْعِجَارَةُ وَالتَّعَالِيَةُ وَالْإِبَاضِيَّةُ وَالصَّفَرِيَّةُ

¹ Qur’ān 16:125.

² Ibid., 2:256.

³ Ibid., 18:103–104.

وَالْبَاقُونَ فُرُوعُهُمْ، وَيَرْوَنَ الْخُرُوجَ عَلَى الْإِمَامِ إِذَا خَالَفَ السُّنَّةَ حَقًّا وَاجِبًا. . . .
 هُمُ الَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا عَلَى أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلِيٍّ (عليه السلام) حِينَ جَرَى أَمْرُ الْحَكَمَيْنِ وَاجْتَمَعُوا
 بِحُرُورَاءَ مِنْ نَاحِيَةِ الْكُوفَةِ وَرَأْسُهُمْ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ الْكَوَاءِ وَعَتَّابُ بْنُ الْأَعُورِ وَعَبْدُ اللَّهِ
 بْنُ وَهَبٍ الرَّاسِبِيُّ وَعُرْوَةُ بْنُ جَرِيرٍ وَيَزِيدُ بْنُ عَاصِمٍ الْمُحَارِبِيُّ وَحُرْقُوشُ بْنُ زُهَيْرٍ
 الْبَجَلِيُّ الْمَعْرُوفُ بِذِي الثُّدَيَّةِ، وَكَانُوا يَوْمِنَدٍ فِي اثْنَيْ عَشَرَ أَلْفَ رَجُلٍ أَهْلَ صَلَاةٍ
 وَصِيَامٍ أَعْنَى يَوْمِ النَّهْرَوَانِ. . . . وَهُمْ الَّذِينَ أَوَّلَهُمْ دُؤُ الْخَوْبِصَرَةَ وَآخِرُهُمْ دُؤُ الثُّدَيَّةِ.

The major factions of the Kharijites are six: al-Azāriqa, al-Najdāt, al-‘Ijāra, al-Tha‘ālība, al-Ibādīyya and al-Ṣafriyya. The remaining factions are but offshoots of these. They believe that it is right and obligatory to revolt against the government if it goes against the Sunna. . . . They are the ones who rebelled against the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Alī (عليه السلام), when the process of arbitration was underway. They gathered at Ḥārūrā in the region of Kufa. Their leaders were ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Kawā’, ‘Atāb b. al-A‘war, ‘Abd Allāh b. Wahb al-Rābīsī, ‘Urwa b. Jarīr, Yazīd b. ‘Āṣim and Ḥurqūṣ b. Zuhayr, better known as Dhū al-Thaddīya. In those days they totalled twelve thousand men dedicated to prayer and fasting—meaning on the day of the Battle of Nahrawan. . . . The first of them was known as Dhū al-Khuwayṣira and the last of them [in the first organized revolt] was known as Dhū al-Thadīyya.¹

Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī said:

قَالَ الْقَاضِي أَبُو بَكْرٍ بْنُ الْعَرَبِيِّ: الْخَوَارِجُ صِنْفَانِ: أَحَدُهُمَا يَزْعُمُ أَنَّ عُثْمَانَ وَعَلِيًّا (عليهما السلام) وَأَصْحَابَ الْجَمَلِ وَصَفَيْنِ وَكُلَّ مَنْ رَضِيَ بِالتَّحْكِيمِ كُفَّارٌ. وَالْآخَرُ يَزْعُمُ أَنَّ كُلَّ مَنْ أَتَى كَبِيرَةً فَهُوَ كَافِرٌ مُخَلَّدٌ فِي النَّارِ أَبَدًا، وَزَادَ نَجْدَةً عَلَى مُعْتَقِدِ الْخَوَارِجِ أَنَّ مَنْ لَمْ يَخْرُجْ وَيُحَارِبِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فَهُوَ كَافِرٌ، وَلَوْ اعْتَقَدَ مُعْتَقَدَهُمْ.

¹ ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa al-niḥal*, p. 115.

Al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn al-ʿArabī said, ‘The Kharijites are two types: Those who claim that ʿUthmān, ʿAlī and those present at the Battle of al-Jamal and Şiffin, and all who were pleased with the arbitration, were disbelievers; and those who claim that anyone who commits a grave sin is a disbeliever who will abide eternally in Hell. Najda [b. ʿĀmir] had added a belief not held by the other Kharijites, namely that the one who does not march out and wage war against the Muslims is himself a disbeliever—even if he held the belief of the Kharijites’.¹

Ibn Taymiyya spoke about the blasphemous beliefs of the Kharijites and their oppressive behaviour against the Muslims,

كَانُوا كَمَا نَعْتَهُمُ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: يَقْتُلُونَ أَهْلَ الْإِسْلَامِ وَيَدْعُونَ أَهْلَ الْأَوْثَانِ وَكَفَرُوا عَلِيَّ بْنَ أَبِي طَالِبٍ وَعُثْمَانَ بْنَ عَفَّانَ وَمَنْ وَالَاهُمَا. وَقَتَلُوا عَلِيَّ بْنَ أَبِي طَالِبٍ مُسْتَحِلِّينَ لِقَتْلِهِ. قَتَلَهُ عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ مُلْجَمٍ الْمُرَادِيُّ مِنْهُمْ، وَكَانَ هُوَ وَغَيْرُهُ مِنَ الْخَوَارِجِ مُجْتَهِدِينَ فِي الْعِبَادَةِ، لَكِنْ كَانُوا جُهَالًا فَارْقُوا السُّنَّةَ وَالْجَمَاعَةَ، فَقَالَ هَؤُلَاءِ: مَا النَّاسُ إِلَّا مُؤْمِنٌ أَوْ كَافِرٌ؛ وَالْمُؤْمِنُ مَنْ فَعَلَ جَمِيعَ الْوَاجِبَاتِ وَتَرَكَ جَمِيعَ الْمَحْرَمَاتِ: فَمَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ كَذَلِكَ فَهُوَ كَافِرٌ: مُخَلَّدٌ فِي النَّارِ. ثُمَّ جَعَلُوا كُلٌّ مِنْ خَالَفَ قَوْلَهُمْ كَذَلِكَ. فَقَالُوا: إِنَّ عُثْمَانَ وَعَلِيًّا وَنَحْوَهُمَا حَكَمُوا بِغَيْرِ مَا أُنْزِلَ اللَّهُ، وَظَلَمُوا فَصَارُوا كُفَرَاءً.

As the Prophet ﷺ described them, they would ‘kill the people of Islam and leave the idolaters’. They declared ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib and ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān disbelievers, as well as those who allied with them. They killed ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, believing that it was lawful. The killer was ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muljam al-Murādī. He, along with the other Kharijites, was devout in their worship; however, they were grossly ignorant [of religious logic and wisdom] and abandoned the Sunna and the community [*jamāʿa*]. They said, ‘There is only the believer and the disbeliever; the

¹ Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī*, 12:283, 285.

believer is he who performs every single obligation and abstains from every single prohibition. So whoever does not fit that description is a disbeliever who will abide eternally in the Fire'. Furthermore, they applied this to anyone who objected to them, and said, 'Uthmān and 'Alī and their ilk have judged by other than what God has revealed and committed oppression therefore they are disbelievers'.¹

Describing the known features of the Kharijites, Ibn Taymiyya said:

لَهُمْ خَاصَّتَانِ مَشْهُورَتَانِ فَارْقَا بِهِمَا جَمَاعَةَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَأَنَّمَتَهُمَا، أَحَدُهُمَا: خُرُوجُهُمْ عَنِ السُّنَّةِ، وَجَعْلُهُمْ مَا لَيْسَ بِسَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةً، أَوْ مَا لَيْسَ بِحَسَنَةٍ حَسَنَةً. الْفَرْقُ الثَّانِي فِي الْخَوَارِجِ وَأَهْلِ الْبِدْعِ: إِنَّهُمْ يَكْفُرُونَ بِالذُّنُوبِ وَالسَّيِّئَاتِ. وَتَرْتَّبُ عَلَى تَكْفِيرِهِمْ بِالذُّنُوبِ اسْتِحْلَالُ دِمَاءِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ، وَإِنَّ دَارَ الْإِسْلَامِ دَارُ حَرْبٍ، وَدَارُهُمْ هِيَ دَارُ الْإِيمَانِ.

There are two well-known and exclusive traits by which they parted from the community of Muslims and the Islamic state: their abandonment of the Sunna and the act of declaring sinful that which is not a sin or declaring as good that which is not good. The second difference between the Kharijites and the remaining people of blameworthy innovation is that they declare people disbelievers over sins and misdeeds. Their imputation of disbelief on account of sins results in their making lawful the blood and wealth of the Muslims and declaring the abode of Islam [*Dār al-Islām*] an abode of war [*Dār al-Ḥarb*] and only the land in their control the abode of faith.²

The reason why the Kharijites are also called Ḥarūriyya is because the first group of Kharijites emerged from the area of

¹ Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū'at al-fatāwā*, 7:481.

² Ibid., 19:72–73.

Ḥārūrā in the days of ‘Alī’s caliphate. Shabbīr Aḥmad ‘Uthmānī said:

قَوْلُهُ ﷺ عَنِ الْحُرُورِيَّةِ إِلَخْ: هُمُ الْخَوَارِجُ، جَمْعُ خَارِجَةٍ، أَيِ طَائِفَةٍ، وَهُمْ قَوْمٌ مُبْتَدِعُونَ سُمُّوا بِذَلِكَ، لِيُخْرِجَهُم عَنِ الدِّينِ، وَخُرُوجِهِمْ عَلَى خِيَارِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَأَصْلُ ذَلِكَ أَنَّ بَعْضَ أَهْلِ الْعِرَاقِ أَنْكَرُوا سِيرَةَ بَعْضِ أَقَارِبِ عُثْمَانَ ﷺ، فَطَعَنُوا عَلَى عُثْمَانَ ﷺ بِذَلِكَ، وَكَانَ يُقَالُ لَهُمْ: الْفُرَّاءُ، لِشِدَّةِ اجْتِهَادِهِمْ فِي التَّلَاوَةِ وَالْعِبَادَةِ، إِلَّا أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَتَأَوَّلُونَ الْقُرْآنَ عَلَى غَيْرِ الْمُرَادِ مِنْهُ، وَيَسْتَبِدُّونَ بِرَأْيِهِمْ، وَيَتَنَطَّعُونَ فِي الزُّهْدِ وَالْخُشُوعِ وَغَيْرِ ذَلِكَ، فَلَمَّا قُتِلَ عُثْمَانُ ﷺ قَاتَلُوا مَعَ عَلِيٍّ ﷺ، وَاعْتَقَدُوا كُفْرَ عُثْمَانَ ﷺ وَمَنْ تَابَعَهُ، وَاعْتَقَدُوا إِمَامَةَ عَلِيٍّ ﷺ وَكُفْرَ مَنْ قَاتَلَهُ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَمَلِ. (فَانْكَرُوا التَّحْكِيمَ، فَتَرَكَوهُ بِصِفَتَيْنِ وَصَارُوا خَوَارِجَ).

The Prophet’s statement regarding ‘the Ḥārūriyya’ is regarding the Kharijites, which is from the word ‘*khārija*’, which means ‘those who went out’. They are a folk from the blameworthy innovators and were given that name because of their separation from the religion and the best of the Muslims. The start of all this lies with some of the people of Iraq who objected to the behaviour of some of ‘Uthmān’s relatives [who were in power], so as a result they defamed ‘Uthmān. They used to be called ‘the reciters’ because of their dedication to recitation and worship; however, they would incorrectly interpret the Qur’ān, force others to adopt their views and go to extremes in asceticism, humility and so on. So after ‘Uthmān was killed they fought alongside ‘Alī, believing that ‘Uthmān and those who followed him were disbelievers. They believed in the imamate of ‘Alī and held that those who fought against him during the Battle of al-Jamal were disbelievers. However, when he chose arbitration, they censured him and left him at Ṣiffīn and became secessionists [Kharijites].¹

¹ Shabbīr Aḥmad ‘Uthmānī, *Fatḥ al-Mulhim*, 5:158.

هُمْ ثَمَانِيَةُ آلَافٍ. وَقِيلَ: كَانُوا أَكْثَرَ مِنْ عَشْرَةِ آلَافٍ. . . . فَتَنَادَوْا مِنْ جَوَانِبِ الْمَسْجِدِ: لَا حُكْمَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ، فَقَالَ: كَلِمَةُ حَقٍّ يُرَادُ بِهَا بَاطِلٌ، فَقَالَ لَهُمْ: لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا ثَلَاثَةٌ: أَنْ لَا نَنْعُكَمُ مِنَ الْمَسَاجِدِ، وَلَا مِنْ رِزْقِكُمْ مِنَ الْفَيِّ، وَلَا نَبْذُوكُمْ بِقِتَالِ مَا لَمْ تُحْدِثُوا فِسَادًا، وَخَرَجُوا شَيْئًا بَعْدَ شَيْءٍ إِلَى أَنْ اجْتَمَعُوا بِالْمَدَائِنِ، . . . فَأَصْرُوا عَلَى الْإِمْتِنَاعِ حَتَّى يَشْهَدَ عَلِيٌّ ۖ نَفْسُهُ بِالْكَفْرِ لِرِضَاةِ بِالْتَّحْكِيمِ، . . . ثُمَّ اجْتَمَعُوا عَلَى أَنْ لَا يَعْتَقِدَ مُعْتَقِدَهُمْ يُكْفَرُ وَيُبَاحُ دُمُهُ وَمَالُهُ وَأَهْلُهُ، . . . فَقَتَلُوا مَنْ اجْتَنَزَ بِهِمْ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ.

They were eight thousand in number, although it was said that they were over ten thousand. . . . [When ‘Alī was making an address] they issued calls from around the mosque, saying, ‘There is no judgement but for God’. ‘Alī said, ‘A true word by which falsehood is intended’. He also said to them, ‘There are three rights you have over us: that we do not prevent you from the mosques, that we do not withhold from you your provision from the *fay*’ (spoils acquired without fighting), and that we do not initiate fighting against you so long as you do not spread corruption’. They seceded, bit by bit, until they gathered in Madā’in . . . and they began withholding obedience [from ‘Alī, saying they would continue] until ‘Alī confessed to disbelief for having preferred arbitration. . . . Then they concurred amongst themselves that whoever does not believe as they do is to be declared a disbeliever whose blood, wealth and family are lawful. . . . Then they killed any of the Muslims who passed their way.¹

هَذَا مُلْخَصٌ أَوَّلُ أَمْرِهِمْ، فَكَانُوا مُخْتَفِينَ فِي خِلَافَةِ عَلِيٍّ ۖ حَتَّى كَانَ مِنْهُمْ عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ مُلْجِمٍ الَّذِي قَتَلَ عَلِيًّا ۖ بَعْدَ أَنْ دَخَلَ عَلِيٌّ ۖ فِي صَلَاةِ الصُّبْحِ. . . . فَظَهَرَ الْخَوَارِجُ حِينَئِذٍ بِالْعِرَاقِ مَعَ نَافِعِ بْنِ الْأَزْرَقِ، وَبِالْيَمَامَةِ مَعَ نَجْدَةَ بْنِ عَامِرٍ، وَزَادَ نَجْدَةُ عَلَى مُعْتَقِدِ الْخَوَارِجِ أَنَّ مَنْ لَمْ يَخْرُجْ وَيُحَارِبِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فَهُوَ

¹ Ibid.

كَافِرٍ، وَلَوْ اعْتَقَدَ مُعْتَقَدَهُمْ. . . وَكَفَرُوا مَنْ تَرَكَ الْأَمْرَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّهْيِ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ إِنْ كَانَ قَادِرًا، وَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ قَادِرًا فَقَدْ ارْتَكَبَ كَبِيرَةً، وَحُكْمُ مُرْتَكِبِ الْكَبِيرَةِ عِنْدَهُمْ حُكْمُ الْكَافِرِ. قَالَ أَبُو مَنْصُورٍ الْبَغْدَادِيُّ فِي "الْمَقَالَاتِ": عِدَّةُ فِرَقِ الْخَوَارِجِ عِشْرُونَ فِرْقَةً.

This is a synopsis of their origin. They were concealed within the ranks during the caliphate of ‘Alī عليه السلام, until ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muljam killed ‘Alī after having approached him during the Dawn Prayer. . . . During that time the Kharijites emerged from Iraq with Nāfi‘ b. al-Azraq, and in Yamama with Najda b. ‘Āmir, and Najda had added a belief not held by the other Kharijites, namely that the one who does not march out and wage war against the Muslims is himself a disbeliever—even if he held the belief of the Kharijites. They imputed disbelief upon those who neglected to enjoin the good and forbid the evil—if they were able to do so and still neglected it. And if they were unable, it was believed that they committed a grave sin, and according to them, the one who commits a major sin is a disbeliever. Abū Manṣūr al-Baghdādī said in *al-Maqālāt*, ‘The factions of the Kharijites are over twenty in number’.¹

13.9 THE PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAITS OF THE KHARIJITES

Commenting on the Kharijites and their activities, Imam Ibn al-Athīr wrote:

ثُمَّ إِنَّ الْخَوَارِجَ لَقِيَ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا وَاجْتَمَعُوا فِي مَنْزِلِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ وَهْبٍ الرَّاسِبِيِّ، فَخَطَبَهُمْ فَزَهَّدَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَأَمَرَهُمْ بِالْأَمْرِ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّهْيِ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: اخْرُجُوا بِنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ الظَّالِمِ أَهْلُهَا إِلَى بَعْضِ كَوَرِ الْجِبَالِ أَوْ إِلَى بَعْضِ هَذِهِ الْمَدَائِنِ مُنْكَرِينَ لِهَذِهِ الْبِدْعِ الْمُضِلَّةِ. ثُمَّ اجْتَمَعُوا فِي مَنْزِلِ شُرَيْحِ بْنِ أَوْفَى الْعَبْسِيِّ، فَقَالَ ابْنُ وَهْبٍ: اشْخَصُوا بِنَا إِلَى بَلَدَةٍ نَجْتَمِعُ فِيهَا لِإِنْفَازِ حُكْمِ اللَّهِ

¹ Ibid.

فَإِنكُمْ أَهْلُ الْحَقِّ. قَالَ شُرَيْحٌ: نَخْرُجُ إِلَى الْمَدَائِنِ فَتَنْزِلُهَا وَنَأْخُذُهَا بِأَبْوَابِهَا وَنُخْرِجُ مِنْهَا سُكَّانَهَا.

Then the Kharijites joined forces and gathered in the home of ‘Abd Allāh b. Wahb al-Rāsibī, where he addressed them and encouraged them to abstain from the delights of the world and to enjoin the good and to forbid the evil. Then he said, ‘Leave with us and let us abandon this city of oppressors and head for the mountains or some of the other cities, while detesting these blameworthy and misguided innovations’. Then they gathered in the house of Shurayḥ b. Awfā al-‘Abasī. Ibn Wahb said, addressing the gathering, ‘Let us come together and head for a land where we will carry out the law of God, for you are the people of the truth’. Shurayḥ said, ‘We would go to the various towns, enter them and expel their inhabitants’.¹

One particularly heinous event occurred when the Kharijites brutally slaughtered ‘Abd Allāh b. Khabbāb and his wife for refusing to declare ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī disbelievers. Imam al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Athīr and Ibn Kathīr narrated:

أَصْجَعُوهُ، فَذَبَحُوهُ، فَسَالَ دَمُهُ فِي الْمَاءِ، وَأَقْبَلُوا إِلَى الْمَرْأَةِ. فَقَالَتْ: أَنَا امْرَأَةٌ، أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ اللَّهَ؟ فَبَقَرُوا بَطْنَهَا، وَقَتَلُوا ثَلَاثَ نِسْوَةٍ مِنْ طَيٍّ.

They put him on the ground and slaughtered him, causing his blood to flow into the water. Then they advanced towards his wife and she said, ‘I am a woman! Do you not fear God?’ Then, they sliced open her stomach and killed three other women from Tay’ [because they sympathized with her].²

When ‘Alī learnt about the murder of ‘Abd Allāh b. Khabbāb, he dispatched al-Hārith b. Murra al-‘Abdī to the Kharijites to investigate the incident. When he reached the Kharijites and asked

¹ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh*, 3:213–214.

² Ibid., 3:219, 7:288; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-umam wa al-mulūk*, 3:119.

why they murdered ‘Abd Allāh, they killed him as well.

Ibn Kathīr mentioned that after this, the Kharijites wrote to ‘Alī, saying,

كُلُّنَا قَتَلَ إِخْوَانَكُمْ، وَنَحْنُ مُسْتَحِلُونَ دِمَاءَهُمْ وَدِمَاءَكُمْ.

‘All of us have killed your brothers, and we believe that both their blood and your blood are lawful’.¹

When ‘Alī dispatched Qays b. Sa‘d b. ‘Ubāda al-Anṣārī to go and negotiate with the Kharijites, he addressed them, saying,

عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، أَخْرَجُوا إِلَيْنَا طَلَبَتَنَا مِنْكُمْ، وَادْخُلُوا فِي هَذَا الْأَمْرِ الَّذِي خَرَجْتُمْ مِنْهُ . . . فَإِنَّكُمْ رَكِبْتُمْ عَظِيمًا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ تَشْهَدُونَ عَلَيْنَا بِالشَّرِكِ وَتَسْفِكُونَ دِمَاءَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ.

‘O servants of God! Hand over those of you whom we want, and obey the authority of the state that you have challenged. . . . For indeed, you have committed a grievous crime; you accuse us of polytheism and shed the blood of the Muslims’.²

Similarly, as ‘Alī’s representative, Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī also tried to convince the Kharijites. He said,

عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، إِنَّا وَإِيَّاكُمْ عَلَى الْحَالِ الْأُولَى الَّتِي كُنَّا عَلَيْهَا، لَيْسَتْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ عَدَاوَةٌ، فَعَلَامَ تُقَاتِلُونَنَا؟

‘O servants of God! Certainly, we and you are in the same state as we were before. There is no hostility as such between you and us, so why do you fight against us?’³

Their terrorist and rebellious state of mind is also revealed in the address ‘Alī made to the Kharijites:

بَيَّنَّا لَنَا بِمَ تَسْتَحِلُّونَ قِتَالَنَا وَالْخُرُوجَ عَنْ جَمَاعَتِنَا، وَتَضَعُونَ أَسْيَافَكُمْ عَلَى عَوَائِقِكُمْ، ثُمَّ تَسْتَعْرِضُونَ النَّاسَ تَضْرِبُونَ رِقَابَهُمْ، إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِينُ، وَاللَّهُ لَوْ قَتَلْتُمْ

¹ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa al-nihāya*, 7:288–289.

² Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh*, 3:219.

³ Ibid.

عَلَى هَذَا دَجَاجَةٌ لَعَظُمَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ قَتْلُهَا، فَكَيْفَ بِالنَّفْسِ الَّتِي قَتَلَهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ حَرَامٌ.

‘Explain to us: by what justification do you declare it lawful to kill us and rebel against the authority of the state and take up arms? And then you go out and slay people! Indeed, this is most surely a clear loss. I swear by God, it would be seen as grievous in the sight of God that you even kill a chicken with this intention, so what about a harmless soul that is considered inviolable in His sight?’¹

When ‘Alī عليه السلام presented the banner of peace to Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī عليه السلام, he went out and said,

مَنْ جَاءَ تَحْتَ هَذِهِ الرَّايَةِ فَهُوَ آمِنٌ، وَمَنْ لَمْ يَقْتُلْ وَلَمْ يَسْتَعْرِضْ فَهُوَ آمِنٌ، وَمَنْ انْصَرَفَ مِنْكُمْ إِلَى الْكُوفَةِ أَوْ إِلَى الْمَدَائِنِ وَخَرَجَ مِنْ هَذِهِ الْجَمَاعَةِ فَهُوَ آمِنٌ.

‘Whoever takes refuge under this banner is safe; whoever abstains from fighting and killing will be safe; and whoever amongst you heads to Kufa or to the other towns and abandons this group is safe’.²

These citations clearly show that the Kharijites declared the Prophet’s Companions and the common Muslims disbelievers and polytheists and considered it not only lawful to kill them, but religiously mandated.

13.10 HOW THE KHARIJITES ROUSED RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS

The Kharijites would base their call for religion on the Qur’ān. Expressing their religious zealotry, they would rouse extremist sentiments in some of the hapless and ignorant Muslims, and misinterpreting jihad, they would incite them to commit mass murder. To motivate them further, they would mention the rewards of Paradise, so as to mentally prepare their followers to

¹ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh*, 3:220; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa al-nihāya*, 7:226.

² Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh*, 3:221.

kill and be killed. Ibn Kathīr recounted a sermon delivered to the Kharijites by one Zayd b. Ḥiṣn al-Ṭā'ī al-Sanbasī.

اجْتَمَعُوا أَيْضًا فِي بَيْتِ زَيْدِ بْنِ حِصْنِ الطَّائِيِّ السَّنْبَسِيِّ فَحَطَبَهُمْ وَحَثَّهُمْ عَلَى الْأَمْرِ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّهْيِ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ، وَتَلَا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتٍ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مِنْهَا قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى: ﴿يَا دَاوُدُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوَىٰ فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ﴾، وَقَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ﴾، وَكَذَا الَّتِي بَعَدَهَا وَبَعَدَهَا الظَّالِمُونَ الْفَاسِقُونَ. ثُمَّ قَالَ: فَأَشْهَدُ عَلَى أَهْلِ دَعْوَتِنَا مِنْ أَهْلِ قِبَلَتِنَا أَنَّهُمْ قَدْ اتَّبَعُوا الْهَوَىٰ، وَنَبَذُوا حُكْمَ الْكِتَابِ، وَجَارُوا فِي الْقَوْلِ وَالْأَعْمَالِ، وَأَنَّ جِهَادَهُمْ حَقٌّ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ. فَبَكَى رَجُلٌ مِنْهُمْ يُقَالُ لَهُ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ سَخِيرَةَ السُّلَمِيِّ، ثُمَّ حَرَّضَ أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَى الْخُرُوجِ عَلَى النَّاسِ، وَقَالَ فِي كَلَامِهِ: وَاصْرِبُوا وُجُوهَهُمْ وَجَبَاهُمْ بِالسُّيُوفِ حَتَّى يُطَاعَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ، فَإِنْ أَنْشَمَ ظَفَرُهُمْ وَأَطَاعَ اللَّهُ كَمَا أَرَدْتُمْ أَنَا بَكُمْ ثَوَابُ الْمُطِيعِينَ لَهُ الْعَامِلِينَ بِأَمْرِهِ، وَإِنْ قُتِلْتُمْ فَأَيُّ شَيْءٍ أَفْضَلُ مِنَ الْمَصِيرِ إِلَى رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ وَجَنَّتِهِ.

They also gathered in the house of Zayd b. Ḥiṣn al-Ṭā'ī al-Sanbasī. He addressed them and encouraged them to enjoin the good and forbid the evil. He recited to them some select verses from the Qur'ān, such as the statement of the Most High, 'O David! Indeed, We have made you a vicegerent on the earth, so judge between people with truth and do not follow vain desires, lest they lead you astray from the path of God' [Qur'ān 38:36], and His statement, 'And whoever does not judge by what God has revealed, then they are the disbelievers'. He went on to recite the similar verses that mention 'they are the oppressors' and 'they are the corrupt'. Then he said, 'I call the people of our call and qibla to bear witness that they [ʿAlī and the community] have followed vain desires and cast the ruling of the Book [Qur'ān] aside and acted unjustly in their words and deeds. And I call you to bear witness that it is incumbent upon the believers to wage jihad against them'. Upon hearing

this, a man amongst them by the name of ‘Abd Allāh b. Sakhbara al-Sulamī began to weep, then he [Zayd b. Ḥiṣn] started to rouse them to revolt and said, ‘Strike their faces and sides with swords until the Most Compassionate and Merciful is obeyed. If you are victorious and God is obeyed as you wish, He will reward you with the recompense of those who obey Him and act upon His commands. And if you are killed, then what could be better than God’s good pleasure and Paradise?’¹

If we analyse the methodology and activities of modern-day terrorists, we see that they are mentally immature, young and brainwashed, and have the same *modus operandi* as the Kharijites of old. Their warped view of Islam is plain to see; on the one hand they are very devout in their worship, and on the other hand they have no compunction in killing peaceful Muslims. Ibn Kathīr reported that once the branch of a date palm fell during a journey and one of the Kharijites picked up a date from it and put it in his mouth. A fellow Kharijite objected and reminded him that he did not have the owner’s permission. Immediately, the man spit it out.²

Similarly, Imam Ibn al-Athīr related that once, when a pig owned by one of the non-Muslim citizens passed by a member of the Kharijites, he killed it with his sword. A fellow Kharijite condemned him for killing it, and when its owner came, he begged his pardon, paid its price and made the man happy.³

Look at the apparent religiosity of the Kharijites on the one hand and their terrorism, barbarism and ruthlessness on the other. Ibn Kathīr reported,

وَمَعَ هَذَا قَدَّمُوا عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ حَبَّابٍ فَذَبَحُوهُ، وَجَاؤُوا إِلَى امْرَأَتِهِ فَقَالَتْ: إِنِّي امْرَأَةٌ حُبْلَى، أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ اللَّهَ، فَذَبَحُوهَا وَبَقَرُوا بَطْنَهَا عَنْ وَلَدِهَا، فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ النَّاسَ هَذَا مِنْ صَنِيعِهِمْ خَافُوا إِنَّهُمْ ذَهَبُوا إِلَى الشَّامِ وَاسْتَعْلَوْا بِقِتَالِ أَهْلِهِ أَنْ يُخْلِفَهُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ فِي

¹ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa al-nihāya*, 7:286.

² Ibid., 7:288.

³ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh*, 3:218.

ذَرَانِيهِمْ وَدِيَارِهِمْ بِهَذَا الصَّنْعِ، فَخَافُوا غَائِلَتَهُمْ، وَأَشَارُوا عَلَى عَلِيٍّ عليه السلام بِأَنْ يَبْدَأَ بِهِؤُلَاءِ، ثُمَّ إِذَا فَرَعَ مِنْهُمْ ذَهَبَ إِلَى أَهْلِ الشَّامِ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ وَالنَّاسُ آمِنُونَ مِنْ شَرِّ هَؤُلَاءِ فَاجْتَمَعَ الرَّأْيُ عَلَى هَذَا وَفِيهِ خَيْرٌ عَظِيمَةٌ لَهُمْ وَأَهْلُ الشَّامِ أَيْضًا. فَأَرْسَلَ عَلِيٌّ عليه السلام إِلَى الْخَوَارِجِ رَسُولًا مِنْ جِهَتِهِ وَهُوَ الْحَرْبُ بْنُ مُرَّةَ الْعَبْدِيُّ، فَقَالَ: أَخْبِرْ لِي خَبْرَهُمْ، وَاعْلَمْ لِي أَمْرَهُمْ وَاكْتُبْ إِلَيَّ بِهِ عَلَى الْجَلِيَّةِ، فَلَمَّا قَدِمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَتَلُوهُ وَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوهُ، فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ ذَلِكَ عَلِيًّا عليه السلام عَزَمَ عَلَى الدَّهَابِ إِلَيْهِمْ أَوَّلًا قَبْلَ أَهْلِ الشَّامِ. فَبَعَثُوا إِلَى عَلِيٍّ عليه السلام يَقُولُونَ: كُلُّنَا قَتَلَ إِخْوَانَكُمْ وَنَحْنُ مُسْتَحِلُونَ دِمَاءَهُمْ وَدِمَاءَكُمْ. فَتَقَدَّمَ إِلَيْهِمْ قَيْسُ بْنُ سَعْدٍ بْنُ عَبَادَةَ فَوَعظَهُمْ فِيمَا ارْتَكَبُوهُ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ الْعَظِيمِ، وَالْخَطْبِ الْحَسَنِ، فَلَمْ يَنْفَعْ وَكَذَلِكَ أَبُو أَيُّوبَ الْأَنْصَارِيُّ وَتَقَدَّمَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلِيُّ بْنُ أَبِي طَالِبٍ إِلَيْهِمْ، فَإِنَّكُمْ قَدْ سَوَّلْتُمْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ أَمْرًا تَقْتُلُونَ عَلَيْهِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَاللَّهُ لَوْ قَتَلْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ دَجَاجَةً لَكَانَ عَظِيمًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ، فَكَيْفَ بِدِمَاءِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ.

So along with this, they brought ‘Abd Allāh b. Khabbāb forward and slaughtered him. Then they approached his wife and she said, ‘I am pregnant; do you not fear God?’ Then they slaughtered her and sliced open her stomach and killed her unborn child. When news of their deed reached people, they were afraid; if they went to the Levant to fight them they would leave their wives and children at risk of suffering the same fate. They were afraid for their families and suggested to ‘Alī that he should first fight them, and then go confront the people of the Levant after he is done with them; that way, the people will be safe from their evil. There was a unanimous opinion that fighting them was the best course, and that was a tremendous good for both them and the people of the Levant. ‘Alī dispatched a messenger to them, one Hārith b. Murra al-‘Abdī, and said to him, ‘Keep me well-informed about them and write to me’. When Hārith reached them they killed him and did not even

give him a chance to speak. When news of this reached ‘Alī, he was resolute in his decision to fight them first before the people of the Levant. The Kharijites soon sent him a message, saying, ‘All of us killed your brothers and we declare lawful their blood and yours’. Qays b. Sa‘d b. ‘Ubāda went to them and exhorted them, denouncing them for their grievous crime, but it was of no avail. Similarly, Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī went to them, as did the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, who said to them, ‘Your vain desires have made pleasing to you that for which you kill the Muslims! I swear by God, it would be seen as grievous in the sight of God that you even kill a chicken with this intention, so what about the blood of the Muslims?’¹

These historical records prove that the Kharijites considered blood a cheap commodity. They had no reservations about killing people and cared not one iota for those who were brought up with the Prophet’s spiritual training.

Since the Prophet ﷺ made it categorically clear that these people would continue to emerge, time and time again, it is easy to recognize the modern-day Kharijites, for they share the same traits of those of old. They too shed the blood of people; they too brutally slaughter women and children and challenge the authority of the state; they too attack mosques, murder peaceful people engaged in worship and target them in the marketplaces; and they too call their dastardly deeds jihad. All the current acts of terrorism committed by the so-called ‘*Mujāhidūn*’ are but a continuation of the Kharijite doctrine and ideology.

13.11 THE BLAMEWORTHY RELIGIOUS INNOVATIONS OF THE KHARIJITES

From the previous sections we learnt that the Kharijites held many baseless positions and added numerous heretical innovations in the religion. They would give self-made interpretations of the

¹ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa al-nihāya*, 7:288.

Qur'ān and hadith and, on that basis, declare lawful the blood of Muslims. The Prophet ﷺ foretold many of their innovations. He foretold that they would kill the Muslims and spare the idolaters;¹ he stated that they would consider it lawful to murder non-Muslim minorities;² he said that they would be extreme in worship;³ he informed us that they would declare the perpetrators of enormities as permanent residents of Hell and hold that their lives and properties are lawful; he said that they would believe that the one who disobeys the Qur'ān in his practice and opinion is a disbeliever; and finally, he foretold that they would believe it is obligatory to revolt and rebel against oppressive and corrupt governments.⁴ Ibn Umar رضي الله عنه mentioned that they would take the Qur'ānic verses revealed about the disbelievers and apply them to the believers.⁵

Early history reveals that the Kharijites were so extreme in their beliefs, ideologies and innovations that they even regarded the Prophet's Companions as disbelievers. Imam al-Shahrastānī writes in *al-Milal wa al-niḥal* that Ziyād b. Umayya asked the Kharijite, 'Urwa b. Udayya [or Udhayna], 'What do you think of Abū Bakr and 'Umar?' He said, 'They were good'. Then he asked about 'Uthmān. He said, 'I took him as my friend in the first six years of his caliphate, but when he introduced new things and made innovations, I stepped aside, because he disbelieved in the end'. Then he asked about 'Alī. He replied, 'He too was good in the beginning, but when he initiated arbitration, he turned into a disbeliever. So, I got away from him too'. And when he asked

¹ Ibid., *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* [The Book of Divine Unity], chapter: 'God's saying, "The angels and the Spirit Ascend to Him"' [Qur'ān 70:4], 6:2702 §6995.

² Narrated by al-Ḥākim in *al-Mustadrak*, 2:166 §2657.

³ Narrated by Abū Ya'fā in *al-Musnad*, 1:90 §90.

⁴ 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayn al-fīraq*, p. 73; Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū'a al-fatāwā*, 13:31.

⁵ Narrated by al-Bukhārī in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ: Kitāb istitāba al-murtaddīn wa al-mu'ānidīn wa qitālibihim* [The Book on Demanding the Repentance of the Apostates and Reprobates, and Fighting Them], chapter: 'On Fighting the Kharijites and the Heretics after Establishing the Evidence against Them', 6:2539.

about Mu‘āwiya, he reviled and condemned him as well.¹ Imam al-Shahrastānī also commented that the Kharijites used to declare the Muslims disbelievers, including the eminent Companions such as ‘Uthmān, Ṭālḥa, Zubayr, ‘Ā’isha and ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās رضي الله عنهم.²

13.12 THE RESEARCH OF IMAM ABŪ BAKR AL-ĀJURRĪ

Imam Abū Bakr al-Ājurri wrote about the Kharijites in his book *Kitāb al-sharī‘a* and penned a chapter called, ‘On the Condemnation of the Kharijites and Their Evil Way, and the Permissibility of Killing them, and the Reward for the One Who Either Kills them or is Killed By Them’. He stated,

لَمْ يَخْتَلِفِ الْعُلَمَاءُ قَدِيمًا وَحَدِيثًا أَنَّ الْخَوَارِجَ قَوْمٌ سَوْءٌ، عَصَاةٌ لِلَّهِ وَلِرَسُولِهِ ﷺ،
وَأَن صَلُّوا وَصَامُوا، وَاجْتَهَدُوا فِي الْعِبَادَةِ، فَلَيْسَ ذَلِكَ بِنَافِعٍ لَهُمْ، وَإِن أَظْهَرُوا الْأَمْرَ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّهْيِ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ، وَلَيْسَ ذَلِكَ بِنَافِعٍ لَهُمْ، لِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ يَتَأَوَّلُونَ الْقُرْآنَ
عَلَى مَا يَهْوُونَ، وَيَمُوهُونَ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِينَ. وَقَدْ حَدَّثَنَا اللَّهُ مِنْهُمْ، وَحَدَّثَنَا النَّبِيُّ ﷺ،
وَحَدَّثَنَا هُمُ الْخُلَفَاءُ الرَّاشِدُونَ بَعْدَهُ، وَحَدَّثَنَا هُمُ الصَّحَابَةُ رضي الله عنهم وَمَنْ تَبِعَهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ
رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِمْ.

الْخَوَارِجُ هُمُ الشُّرَاةُ الْأَنْجَاسُ الْأَرْجَاسُ، وَمَنْ كَانَ عَلَى مَذْهَبِهِمْ مِنْ سَائِرِ الْخَوَارِجِ،
يَتَوَارَثُونَ هَذَا الْمَذْهَبَ قَدِيمًا وَحَدِيثًا، وَيَخْرُجُونَ عَلَى الْأَئِمَّةِ وَالْأَمْرَاءِ وَيَسْتَحِلُّونَ
قَتْلَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ. وَأَوَّلُ قَرْنٍ طَلَعَ مِنْهُمْ عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ، هُوَ رَجُلٌ طَعَنَ عَلَى
النَّبِيِّ ﷺ، وَهُوَ يَقْسِمُ الْعَنَائِمَ بِالْجَعْرَانَةِ، فَقَالَ: اْعْدِلْ يَا مُحَمَّدُ، فَمَا أَرَاكَ تَعْدِلُ،
فَقَالَ ﷺ: وَبِذَلِكَ، فَمَنْ يَعْدِلُ إِذَا لَمْ أَكُنْ أَعْدِلُ؟ فَأَرَادَ عُمَرُ رضي الله عنه قَتْلَهُ، فَمَنْعَهُ النَّبِيُّ
ﷺ مِنْ قَتْلِهِ، وَأَخْبَرَ عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ: أَنَّ هَذَا وَأَصْحَابًا لَهُ يَحْقِرُ أَحَدَكُمْ صَلَاتَهُ
مَعَ صَلَاتِهِمْ، وَصِيَامَهُ مَعَ صِيَامِهِمْ، يَمْرُقُونَ مِنَ الدِّينِ كَمَا يَمْرُقُ السَّهْمُ مِنَ الرِّمِيَّةِ.
وَأَمَرَ عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ فِي غَيْرِ حَدِيثٍ بِقَتَالِهِمْ، وَبَيَّنَ فَضْلَ مَنْ قَتَلَهُمْ
أَوْ قَتَلُوهُ. ثُمَّ إِنَّهُمْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ بُلْدَانٍ شَتَّى، وَاجْتَمَعُوا وَأَظْهَرُوا الْأَمْرَ

¹ Al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa al-niḥal*, 1:118.

² Ibid., 1:121.

بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّهْيِ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ، حَتَّى قَدِمُوا الْمَدِينَةَ، فَفَتَلُوا عُثْمَانَ بْنَ عَفَّانَ (رضي الله عنه). وَقَدْ اجْتَهَدَ أَصْحَابُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ مِمَّنْ كَانَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ فِي أَنْ لَا يُقْتَلَ عُثْمَانُ، فَمَا أَطَاقُوا ذَلِكَ. ثُمَّ خَرَجُوا بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ (رضي الله عنه)، وَلَمْ يَرْضَوْا بِحُكْمِهِ، وَأَظْهَرُوا قَوْلَهُمْ. وَقَالُوا: لَا حُكْمَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ، فَقَالَ عَلِيٌّ (رضي الله عنه): كَلِمَةُ حَقٍّ أَرَادُوا بِهَا الْبَاطِلَ، فَقَاتَلَهُمْ عَلِيٌّ (رضي الله عنه) فَأَكْرَمَهُ اللَّهُ بِقَتْلِهِمْ، وَأَخْبَرَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ بِفَضْلِ مَنْ قَتَلَهُمْ أَوْ قَتَلُوهُ، وَقَاتَلَ مَعَهُ الصَّحَابَةُ (رضي الله عنهم). فَصَارَ سَيْفُ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ فِي الْخَوَارِجِ سَيْفَ حَقٍّ إِلَى أَنْ تَقُومَ السَّاعَةُ.

فَلَا يَنْبَغِي لِمَنْ رَأَى اجْتِهَادَ خَارِجِيٍّ قَدْ خَرَجَ عَلَى إِمَامٍ، عَادِلًا كَانَ الْإِمَامُ أَمْ جَائِرًا، فَخَرَجَ وَجَمَعَ جَمَاعَةً وَسَلَّ سَيْفَهُ، وَاسْتَحَلَّ قِتَالَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ، فَلَا يَنْبَغِي لَهُ أَنْ يَغْتَرَّ بِقِرَاءَتِهِ لِلْقُرْآنِ، وَلَا بِطَوَّلِ قِيَامِهِ فِي الصَّلَاةِ، وَلَا بِدَوَامِ صِيَامِهِ، وَلَا بِحُسْنِ أَلْفَاظِهِ فِي الْعِلْمِ إِذَا كَانَ مَذْهَبُهُ مَذْهَبَ الْخَوَارِجِ.

All the scholars of the past and the present agree that the Kharijites are an evil folk who disobey God, the Exalted and Sublime, and His Messenger ﷺ—even if they pray and fast and strive in worship. None of that will avail them, despite their show of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. That is because they interpret the Qur’ān according to their vain desires and pass it off on the Muslims. God, the Exalted and Sublime, the Prophet ﷺ and the Rightly Guided Caliphs after the Prophet ﷺ warned us of them, as did the Companions and those who followed them in excellence—may God have mercy upon them.

The Kharijites are a vile and despicable folk, as are the other sects that adhere to their doctrine and inherit their way, from those of the past to the present day. They revolt against the governments and declare lawful the murder of Muslims. The first of them to appear was during the time of the Messenger of God, and he was a man who accused the Prophet ﷺ of injustice as he apportioned the war booty at Jaʿrāna. He said, ‘O Muhammad! Be just,

for I don't think you are acting fairly'. So the Messenger of God ﷺ replied, 'Woe to you! Who will be just if I am not just?' 'Umar wanted to kill him but the Prophet ﷺ forbade him and said, 'Leave him, for he has compatriots. You will belittle your prayers and fasting in comparison to theirs, but they shall pass through the religion just as an arrow passes through a hunted game'.

In several hadith reports the Prophet ﷺ ordered that they be fought, and explained the virtue of the one who either kills or is killed by them. After their appearance they abandoned the various cities and gathered together, enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, until they reached Medina and killed 'Uthmān b. 'Affān ؓ. The Prophet's Companions who were in Medina tried to prevent 'Uthmān's murder but were unsuccessful. Afterwards, the same people revolted against the Commander of the Faithful, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib ؓ, because they were displeased with his judgement, and raised their slogan, 'There is no judgement but for God'. In response, 'Alī said, 'A word of truth by which falsehood is intended'. Then 'Alī fought against them and God honoured him with slaying them. The Prophet ﷺ informed us about the virtue of the one who either kills them or is killed by them. The Companions fought alongside 'Alī, and as a result, 'Alī's sword against the Kharijites became a sword of truth until the Final Hour.

Therefore, if a Kharijite revolts against the government—whether the government is just or not—and gathers forces and unsheathes his sword, no one should be deceived by his efforts in reciting the Qur'ān, praying lengthy prayers, engaging in constant fasts or his uttering of fine words regarding Sacred Knowledge, since his doctrine is that of the Kharijites.

Some of the most well-known reports about the Kharijites were narrated by Imam al-Ājurrī in his chapter about the reward of

those who fight against them and either kill them or get killed by them. ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه reported:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: يَخْرُجُ فِي آخِرِ الزَّمَانِ قَوْمٌ أَحْدَاثُ الْأَسْنَانِ سُفَهَاءُ الْأَحْلَامِ يَقُولُونَ مِنْ خَيْرِ قَوْلِ النَّاسِ، يَمْرُقُونَ مِنَ الْإِسْلَامِ كَمَا يَمْرُقُ السَّهْمُ مِنَ الرَّمِيَّةِ، مَنْ لَقِيَهُمْ فَلْيَقْتُلْهُمْ، فَإِنَّ قَتْلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ.

The Messenger of God ﷺ said, ‘At the end of time there shall appear a folk, young in age and foolish. They will utter the best of words spoken by people, but they shall pass through Islam just as an arrow passes through a hunted game. Whoever encounters them [during war] should kill them, for killing them will be rewarded by God’.¹

Abū Umāma رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said,

طُوبَى لِمَنْ قَتَلَهُمْ وَقَتَلَوْهُمْ.

‘Glad tidings of Paradise to those who kill them or are killed by them’.²

Abū Umāma رضي الله عنه also reported that the Prophet ﷺ said thrice, ‘They are the dogs of the Hellfire; they are the dogs of the Hellfire; they are the dogs of the Hellfire’. Then he ﷺ said,

¹ Narrated by al-Bukhārī in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ: Kitāb istitāba al-murtaddīn wa al-mu‘ānidīn wa qitālihim* [The Book on Demanding the Repentance of the Apostates and Reprobates, and Fighting Them], chapter: ‘On Fighting the Kharijites and the Heretics after Establishing the Evidence against Them’, 6:2539 §6531; Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ: Kitāb al-Zakāt* [The Book of Zakat], chapter: ‘The Encouragement to Kill the Kharijites’, 2:746 §1066; and al-Tirmidhī in *al-Sunan: Kitāb al-fitan* [The Book of Tribulations], chapter: ‘Concerning the Trait of Renegades [*al-māriqa*]', 4:481 §2188. After having narrated this tradition in *al-Sunan*, Imam al-Tirmidhī said, ‘This tradition is reported by ‘Alī, Abū Sa‘īd and Abū Dharr رضي الله عنه, and it is a fine sound tradition’.

² Narrated by Abū Dāwūd in *al-Sunan: Kitāb al-Sunna*, 4:243 §4765; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal in *al-Musnad*, 3:224 §13362; and al-Ḥākim in *al-Mustadrak*, 2:161 §2649.

شَرُّ قَتْلَى فُقِلُوا تَحْتَ ظِلِّ السَّمَاءِ ، وَخَيْرُ قَتْلَى الَّذِينَ قَتَلُوهُمْ.

‘They are the most evil of those slain under the heavens, and the best of those slain are the ones killed by them’.¹

‘Alī عليه السلام said,

أَيْنَمَا لَقَيْتُمُوهُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُمْ، فَإِنَّ قَتْلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ لِمَنْ قَتَلَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

‘Wherever you encounter them [during war], slay them, for whoever slays them will be granted a reward on the Day of Resurrection’.²

‘Ā’isha عليها السلام said,

ذَكَرَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ الْخَوَارِجَ، فَقَالَ: هُمْ شَرُّ أُمَّتِي يَقْتُلُهُمْ خِيَارُ أُمَّتِي.

‘The Messenger of God ﷺ mentioned the Kharijites and said, “They are the worst of my *Umma* and shall be killed by the best of my *Umma*”.’

¹ Narrated by Ibn Mājah in *al-Sunan*: ‘Introduction’, section: ‘On the Kharijites’, 1:62 §176; and al-Ḥākim in *al-Mustadrak*, 2:163 §2654.

² Narrated by al-Bukhārī in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ: Kitāb istitāba al-murtaddīn wa al-mu’ānidīn wa qitālihim* [The Book on Demanding the Repentance of the Apostates and Reprobates, and Fighting Them], chapter: ‘On Fighting the Kharijites and the Heretics after Establishing the Evidence against Them’, 6:2539 §6531; and Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ: Kitāb al-Zakāt* [The Book of Zakat], chapter: ‘The Encouragement to Kill the Kharijites’, 2:746 §1066.